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## EDITOR'S NOTE

"I give far more care to my lectures than to my books . . . I have taken more pains with my Oxford lectures than anything else I have ever done, and I must say that I am immensely disappointed at their not being more constantly quoted and read." So Ruskin once confided to a friend; and certainly in his lectures on Art—which to him included everything which ministers to a sense of beauty—there are enshrined many of his finest phrases. Ruskin dealt with his compositions as an artist with his pictures. Thoughts were first confided to a note-book—they are comparable with the rough sketches of the painter—and were then moulded, trimmed, and polished into the exquisite form in which they were finally presented, and which constituted him one of the greatest stylists in English prose.

As an art critic Ruskin was the greatest force of his day, and this as much for the undoubted sincerity of all that he wrote and said as for the forcefulness of his method of expression. Oftentimes—as in the Pre-Raphaelite days—it was Ruskin against the world. If to-day it seems but an echo of a far-off battle, the voice of a prophet whom after-events have sometimes shown to be wrong, yet it is all good, all inspiring. Ruskin, with his "All great Art is praise, will ever live as one of the noblest apostles of the beautiful.

John Ruskin was born in 1819 and died in 1900.



# THE TWO PATHS

LECTURES ON ARCHITECTURE  
AND PAINTING  
PRE-RAPHAELITISM  
AND  
NOTES ON THE TURNER  
GALLERY

BY  
JOHN RUSKIN

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THE TWO PATHS  
BEING LECTURES ON ART AND ITS  
APPLICATION TO DECORATION  
AND MANUFACTURE



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

### TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE following addresses, though spoken at different times, are intentionally connected in subject; their aim being to set one or two main principles of art in simple light before the general student, and to indicate their practical bearing on modern design. The law which it has been my effort chiefly to illustrate is the dependence of all noble design, in any kind, on the sculpture or painting of Organic Form.

This is the vital law; lying at the root of all that I have ever tried to teach respecting architecture or any other art. It is also the law most generally disallowed.

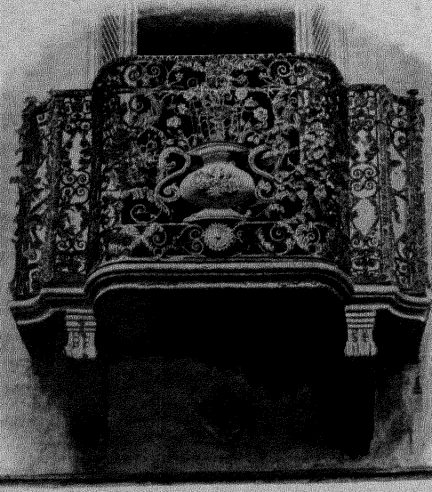
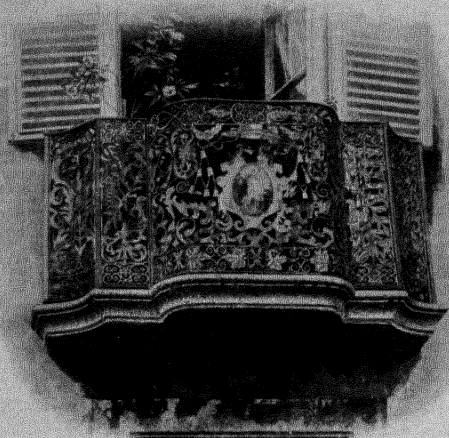
I believe this must be so in every subject. We are all of us willing enough to accept dead truths or blunt ones; which can be fitted harmlessly into spare niches, or shrouded and confined at once out of the way, we holding complacently the cemetery keys, and supposing we have learned something. But a sapling truth, with earth at its root and blossom on its branches; or a trenchant truth, that can cut its way through bars and sods; most men, it seems to me, dislike the sight or entertainment of, if by any means such guest or vision may be avoided. And indeed, this is no wonder; for one such truth, thoroughly accepted, connects itself strangely with others, and there is no saying what it may lead us to.

And thus the gist of what I have tried to teach about architecture has been throughout denied by my architect readers, even when they thought what I said suggestive in other particulars. "Anything but that. Study Italian Gothic?—perhaps it would be as well: build with pointed arches?—there is no objection: use solid stone and well-burnt brick?—by all means: but—learn to carve or paint organic form ourselves! How can such a thing be asked? We are above all that. The carvers and painters are our servants—quite subordinate people. They ought to be glad if we leave room for them."









IRON-WORK OF BELLINZONA

(See page 118)





# THE TWO PATHS

## LECTURE I

### THE DETERIORATIVE POWER OF CONVENTIONAL ART OVER NATIONS

As I passed, last summer, for the first time, through the north of Scotland, it seemed to me that there was a peculiar painfulness in its scenery, caused by the non-manifestation of the powers of human art. I had never travelled in, nor even heard or conceived of such a country before; nor, though I had passed much of my life amidst mountain scenery in the south, was I before aware how much of its charm depended on the little gracefulnesses and tender-nesses of human work, which are mingled with the beauty of the Alps, or spared by their desolation. It is true that the art which carves and colours the front of a Swiss cottage is not of any very exalted kind; yet it testifies to the completeness and the delicacy of the faculties of the mountaineer: it is true that the remnants of tower and battlement, which afford footing to the wild vine on the Alpine promontory, form but a small part of the great serration of its rocks; and yet it is just that fragment of their broken outline which gives them their pathetic power and historical majesty. And this element among the wilds of our own country I found wholly wanting. The Highland cottage is literally a heap of grey stones, choked up, rather than roofed over, with black peat and withered heather; the only approach to an effort at decoration consists in the placing of the clods of protective peat obliquely on its roof, so as to give a diagonal arrangement of lines, looking somewhat as if the surface had been scored over by a gigantic claymore.

And, at least among the northern hills of Scotland, elements of more ancient architectural interest are equally absent. The solitary peel-house is hardly discernible by

the windings of the stream; the roofless aisle of the priory is lost among the enclosures of the village; and the capital city of the Highlands, Inverness, placed where it might ennoble one of the sweetest landscapes, and by the shore of one of the loveliest estuaries in the world—placed between the crests of the Grampians and the flowing of the Moray Firth, as if it were a jewel clasping the folds of the mountains to the blue zone of the sea—is only distinguishable from a distance by one architectural feature, and exalts all the surrounding landscape by no other associations than those which can be connected with its modern castellated gaol.

While these conditions of Scottish scenery affected me very painfully, it being the first time in my life that I had been in any country possessing no valuable monuments or examples of art, they also forced me into the consideration of one or two difficult questions respecting the effect of art on the human mind; and they forced these questions upon me eminently for this reason, that while I was wandering disconsolately among the moors of the Grampians, where there was no art to be found, news of peculiar interest were every day arriving from a country where there was a great deal of art, and art of a delicate kind, to be found. Among the models set before you in this institution, and in the others established throughout the kingdom for the teaching of design, there are, I suppose, none in their kind more admirable than the decorated works of India. They are, indeed, in all materials capable of colour, wool, marble, or metal, almost inimitable in their delicate application of divided hue and fine arrangement of fantastic line. Nor is this power of theirs exerted by the people rarely, or without enjoyment; the love of subtle design seems universal in the race, and is developed in every implement that they shape, and every building that they raise; it attaches itself with the same intensity, and with the same success, to the service of superstition, of pleasure or of cruelty; and enriches alike, with one profusion of enchanted iridescence, the dome of the pagoda, the fringe of the girdle, and the edge of the sword.

So then you have, in these two great populations, Indian and Highland—in the races of the jungle and of the moor—two national capacities distinctly and accurately opposed. On the one side you have a race rejoicing in art, and eminently and universally endowed with the gift of

it; on the other you have a people careless of art, and apparently incapable of it, their utmost efforts hitherto reaching no farther than to the variation of the positions of the bars of colour in square chequers. And we are thus urged naturally to inquire what is the effect on the moral character, in each nation, of this vast difference in their pursuits and apparent capacities? and whether those rude chequers of the tartan, or the exquisitely fancied involutions of the Cashmere, fold habitually over the noblest hearts? We have had our answer. Since the race of man began its course of sin on this earth, nothing has ever been done by it so significative of all bestial and lower than bestial degradation, as the acts of the Indian race in the year that has just passed by. Cruelty as fierce may indeed have been wreaked, and brutality as abominable been practised before, but never under like circumstances; rage of prolonged war, and resentment of prolonged oppression, have made men as cruel before now; and gradual decline into barbarism, where no examples of decency or civilisation existed around them, has sunk, before now, isolated populations to the lowest level of possible humanity. But cruelty stretched to its fiercest against the gentle and unoffending, and corruption festered to its loathsome in the midst of the witnessing presence of a disciplined civilisation—these we could not have known to be within the practicable compass of human guilt, but for the acts of the Indian mutineer. And, as thus, on the one hand, you have an extreme energy of baseness displayed by these lovers of art; on the other—as if to put the question into the narrowest compass—you have had an extreme energy of virtue displayed by the despisers of art. Among all the soldiers to whom you owe your victories in the Crimea, and your avenging in the Indies, to none are you bound by closer bonds of gratitude than to the men who have been born and bred among those desolate Highland moors. And thus you have the differences in capacity and circumstance between the two nations, and the differences in result on the moral habits of two nations, put into the most significant—the most palpable—the most brief opposition. Out of the peat cottage come faith, courage, self-sacrifice, purity, and piety, and whatever else is fruitful in the work of Heaven; out of the ivory palace come treachery, cruelty, cowardice, idolatry, bestiality—whatever else is fruitful in the work of Hell.



But the difficulty does not close here. From one instance, of however great apparent force, it would be wholly unfair to gather any general conclusion—wholly illogical to assert that because we had once found love of art connected with moral baseness, the love of art must be the general root of moral baseness; and equally unfair to assert that, because we had once found neglect of art coincident with nobleness of disposition, neglect of art must be always the source or sign of that nobleness. But if we pass from the Indian peninsula into other countries of the globe; and from our own recent experience, to the records of history, we shall still find one great fact fronting us, in stern universality—namely, the apparent connection of great success in art with subsequent national degradation. You find, in the first place, that the nations which possessed a refined art were always subdued by those who possessed none: you find the Lydian subdued by the Mede; the Athenian by the Spartan; the Greek by the Roman; the Roman by the Goth; the Burgundian by the Switzer; but you find, beyond this, that even where no attack by any external power has accelerated the catastrophe of the state, the period in which any given people reach their highest power in art is precisely that in which they appear to sign the warrant of their own ruin; and that, from the moment in which a perfect statue appears in Florence, a perfect picture in Venice, or a perfect fresco in Rome, from that hour forward, probity, industry, and courage seem to be exiled from their walls, and they perish in a sculpturesque paralysis, or a many-coloured corruption.

But even this is not all. As art seems thus, in its delicate form, to be one of the chief promoters of indolence and sensuality—so, I need hardly remind you, it hitherto has appeared only in energetic manifestation when it was in the service of superstition. The four great manifestations of human intellect which founded the four principal kingdoms of art, Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek, and Italian, were developed by the strong excitement of active superstition in the worship of Osiris, Belus, Minerva, and the Queen of Heaven. Therefore, to speak briefly, it may appear very difficult to show that art has ever yet existed in a consistent and thoroughly energetic school, unless it was engaged in the propagation of falsehood, or the encouragement of vice.

And finally, while art has thus shown itself always active

in the service of luxury and idolatry, it has also been strongly directed to the exaltation of cruelty. A nation which lives a pastoral and innocent life never decorates a shepherd's staff or the plough handle, but races who live by depredation and slaughter nearly always bestow exquisite ornaments on the quiver, the helmet, and the spear.

Does it not seem to you, then, on all these three counts, more than questionable whether we are assembled here in Kensington Museum to any good purpose? Might we not justly be looked upon with suspicion and fear, rather than with sympathy, by the innocent and unartistical public? Are we even sure of ourselves? Do we know what we are about? Are we met here as honest people? or are we not rather so many Catilines assembled to devise the hasty degradation of our country, or, like a conclave of midnight witches, to summon and send forth, on new and unsuspected missions, the demons of luxury, cruelty, and superstition?

I trust, upon the whole, that it is not so: I am sure that Mr. Redgrave and Mr. Cole do not at all include results of this kind in their conception of the ultimate objects of the institution which owes so much to their strenuous and well-directed exertions. And I have put this painful question before you, only that we may face it thoroughly, and, as I hope, out-face it. If you will give it a little sincere attention this evening, I trust we may find sufficiently good reasons for our work, and proceed to it hereafter, as all good workmen should do, with clear heads and calm consciences.

To return, then, to the first point of difficulty, the relations between art and mental disposition in India and Scotland. It is quite true that the art of India is delicate and refined. But it has one curious character distinguishing it from all other art of equal merit in design—it *never represents a natural fact*. It either forms its compositions out of meaningless fragments of colour and flowings of line; or, if it represents any living creature, it represents that creature under some distorted and monstrous form. To all the facts and forms of nature it wilfully and resolutely opposes itself; it will not draw a man, but an eight-armed monster; it will not draw a flower, but only a spiral or a zigzag.

It thus indicates that the people who practise it are cut off from all possible sources of healthy knowledge or natural

delight; that they have wilfully sealed up and put aside the entire volume of the world, and have got nothing to read, nothing to dwell upon, but that imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, of which we are told that "it is only evil continually." Over the whole spectacle of creation they have thrown a veil in which there is no rent. For them no star peeps through the blanket of the dark, for them neither their heaven shines nor their mountains rise, for them the flowers do not blossom, for them the creatures of field and forest do not live. They lie bound in the dungeon of their own corruption, encompassed only by doleful phantoms, or by spectral vacancy.

Need I remind you what an exact reverse of this condition of mind, as respects the observance of nature, is presented by the people whom we have just been led to contemplate in contrast with the Indian race? You will find upon reflection, that all the highest points of the Scottish character are connected with impressions derived straight from the natural scenery of their country. No nation has ever before shown, in the general tone of its language—in the general current of its literature—so constant a habit of hallowing its passions and confirming its principles by direct association with the charm, or power, of nature. The writings of Scott or Burns—and yet more, of the far greater poets than Burns who gave Scotland her traditional ballads—furnish you in every stanza, almost in every line, with examples of this association of natural scenery with the passions; \* but an instance of its farther connection with moral principle struck me forcibly just at the time when I was most lamenting the absence of art among the people. In one of the loneliest districts of Scotland, where the peat cottages are darkest, just at the western foot of that great mass of the Grampians which encircles the sources of the Spey

\* The great poets of Scotland, like the great poets of all other countries, never write dissolutely, either in meaning or method; but with stern and measured meaning in every syllable. Here's a bit of first-rate work for example:—

" Tweed said to Till,  
 ' What gars ye rin sae still ?'  
 Till said to Tweed,  
 ' Though ye rin wi' speed,  
 And I rin slaw,  
 Whar ye droon ae man,  
 I droon twa.' "

and the Dee, the main road which traverses the chain winds round the foot of a broken rock called Crag, or Craig Ellachie. There is nothing remarkable in either its height or form; it is darkened with a few scattered pines, and touched along its summit with a flush of heather; but it constitutes a kind of headland, or leading promontory, in the group of hills to which it belongs—a sort of initial letter of the mountains; and thus stands in the minds of the inhabitants of the district, the Clan Grant, for a type of their country, and of the influence of that country upon themselves. Their sense of this is beautifully indicated in the war-cry of the clan, “Stand fast, Craig Ellachie.” You may think long over those few words without exhausting the deep wells of feeling and thought contained in them—the love of the native land, the assurance of their faithfulness to it; the subdued and gentle assertion of indomitable courage—I *may* need to be told to stand, but, if I do, Craig Ellachie does. You could not but have felt, had you passed beneath it at the time when so many of England’s dearest children were being defended by the strength of heart of men born at its foot, how often among the delicate Indian palaces, whose marble was pallid with horror, and whose vermilion was darkened with blood, the remembrance of its rough grey rocks and purple heaths must have risen before the sight of the Highland soldier; how often the hailing of the shot and the shriek of battle would pass away from his hearing, and leave only the whisper of the old pine branches—“Stand fast, Craig Ellachie!”

You have, in these two nations, seen in direct opposition the effects on moral sentiment of art without nature, and of nature without art. And you see enough to justify you in suspecting—while, if you choose to investigate the subject more deeply and with other examples, you will find enough to justify you in *concluding*—that art, followed as such, and for its own sake, irrespective of the interpretation of nature by it, is destructive of whatever is best and noblest in humanity; but that nature, however simply observed, or imperfectly known, is, in the degree of the affection felt for it, protective and helpful to all that is noblest in humanity.

You might then conclude farther, that art, so far as it was devoted to the record or the interpretation of nature, would be helpful and ennobling also.

And you would conclude this with perfect truth. Let

me repeat the assertion distinctly and solemnly, as the first that I am permitted to make in this building, devoted in a way so new and so admirable to the service of the art-students of England—Wherever art is practised for its own sake, and the delight of the workman is in what he *does* and *produces*, instead of in what he *interprets* or *exhibits*—there art has an influence of the most fatal kind on brain and heart, and it issues, if long so pursued, in the *destruction both of intellectual power and moral principle*; whereas art, devoted humbly and self-forgetfully to the clear statement and record of the facts of the universe, is always helpful and beneficent to mankind, full of comfort, strength, and salvation.

Now, when you were once well assured of this, you might logically infer another thing, namely, that when Art was occupied in the function in which she was serviceable, she would herself be strengthened by the service; and when she was doing what Providence without doubt intended her to do, she would gain in vitality and dignity just as she advanced in usefulness. On the other hand, you might gather, that when her agency was distorted to the deception or degradation of mankind, she would herself be equally misled and degraded—that she would be checked in advance, or precipitated in decline.

And this is the truth also; and holding this clue you will easily and justly interpret the phenomena of history. So long as Art is steady in the contemplation and exhibition of natural facts, so long she herself lives and grows; and in her own life and growth partly implies, partly secures, that of the nation in the midst of which she is practised. But a time has always hitherto come, in which, having thus reached a singular perfection, she begins to contemplate that perfection, and to imitate it, and deduce rules and forms from it; and thus to forget her duty and ministry as the interpreter and discoverer of Truth. And in the very instant when this diversion of her purpose and forgetfulness of her function take place—forgetfulness generally coincident with her apparent perfection—in that instant, I say, begins her actual catastrophe; and by her own fall, so far as she has influence, she accelerates the ruin of the nation by which she is practised.

The study, however, of the effect of art on the mind of nations is one rather for the historian than for us; at all events it is one for the discussion of which we have no more

time this evening. But I will ask your patience with me while I try to illustrate, in some farther particulars, the dependence of the healthy state and power of art itself upon the exercise of its appointed function in the interpretation of fact.

You observe that I always say *interpretation*, never *imitation*. My reason for doing so is, first, that good art rarely imitates; it usually only describes or explains. But my second and chief reason is that good art always consists of two things: First, the observation of fact; secondly, the manifesting of human design and authority in the way that fact is told. Great and good art must unite the two; it cannot exist for a moment but in their unity; it consists of the two as essentially as water consists of oxygen and hydrogen, or marble of lime and carbonic acid.

Let us inquire a little into the nature of each of the elements. The first element, we say, is the love of Nature, leading to the effort to observe and report her truly. And this is the first and leading element. Review for yourselves the history of art, and you will find this to be a manifest certainty, that *no great school ever yet existed which had not for primal aim the representation of some natural fact as truly as possible*. There have only yet appeared in the world three schools of perfect art—schools, that is to say, which did their work as well as it seems possible to do it. These are the Athenian,\* Florentine, and Venetian. The Athenian proposed to itself the perfect representation of the form of the human body. It strove to do that as well as it could; it did that as well as it can be done; and all its greatness was founded upon and involved in that single and honest effort. The Florentine school proposed to itself the perfect expression of human emotion, the showing of the effects of passion in the human face and gesture. I call this the Florentine school because, whether you take Raphael for the culminating master of expressional art in Italy, or Leonardo, or Michael Angelo, you will find that the whole energy of the national effort which produced those masters had its root in Florence; not at Urbino or Milan. I say, then, this Florentine or leading Italian school proposed to itself human expression for its aim in natural truth; it strove to do that as well as it could—did it as well as it can be done—and all its greatness is rooted in that single and

\* See the further notice of the real spirit of Greek work in Lecture III.

honest effort. Thirdly, the Venetian school proposed to itself the representation of the effect of colour and shade on all things; chiefly on the human form. It tried to do that as well as it could—did it as well as it can be done—and all its greatness is founded on that single and honest effort.

Pray, do not leave this room without a perfectly clear holding of these three ideas. You may try them, and toss them about, afterwards, as much as you like, to see if they'll bear shaking; but do let me put them well and plainly into your possession. Attach them to three works of art which you all have either seen or continually heard of. There's the (so-called) "Theseus" of the Elgin marbles. That represents the whole end and aim of the Athenian school—the natural form of the human body. All their conventional architecture—their graceful shaping and painting of pottery—whatsoever other art they practised—was dependent for its greatness on this sheet-anchor of central aim: true shape of living man. Then take, for your type of the Italian school, Raphael's "Disputa del Sacramento"; that will be an accepted type by everybody, and will involve no possibly questionable points: the Germans will admit it; the English academicians will admit it; and the English purists and pre-Raphaelites will admit it. Well, there you have the truth of human expression proposed as an aim. That is the way people look when they feel this or that—when they have this or that other mental character: are they devotional, thoughtful, affectionate, indignant, or inspired? are they prophets, saints, priests, or kings? then—whatsoever is truly thoughtful, affectionate, prophetic, priestly, kingly—that the Florentine school tried to discern, and show; *that* they have discerned and shown; and all their greatness is first fastened in their aim at this central truth—the open expression of the living human soul.

Lastly, take Veronese's "Marriage in Cana" in the Louvre. There you have the most perfect representation possible of colour, and light, and shade, as they affect the external aspect of the human form, and its immediate accessories, architecture, furniture, and dress. This external aspect of noblest nature was the first aim of the Venetians, and all their greatness depended on their resolution to achieve, and their patience in achieving it.

Here, then, are the three greatest schools of the former world exemplified for you in three well-known works. The

Phidian "Theseus" represents the Greek school pursuing truth of form; the "Disputa" of Raphael, the Florentine school pursuing truth of mental expression; the "Marriage in Cana," the Venetian school pursuing truth of colour and light. But do not suppose that the law which I am stating to you—the great law of art-life—can only be seen in these, the most powerful of all art schools. It is just as manifest in each and every school that ever has had life in it at all. Wheresoever the search after truth begins, there life begins; wheresoever that search ceases, there life ceases. As long as a school of art holds any chain of natural facts, trying to discover more of them and express them better daily, it may play hither and thither as it likes on this side of the chain or that; it may design grotesques and conventionalisms, build the simplest buildings, serve the most practical utilities, yet all it does will be gloriously designed and gloriously done; but let it once quit hold of the chain of natural fact, cease to pursue that as the clue to its work; let it propose to itself any other end than preaching this living word, and think first of showing its own skill or its own fancy, and from that hour its fall is precipitate—its destruction sure; nothing that it does or designs will ever have life or loveliness in it more; its hour has come, and there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither it goeth.

Let us take for example that school of art over which many of you would perhaps think this law had little power—the school of Gothic architecture. Many of us may have been in the habit of thinking of that school rather as of one of forms than of facts—a school of pinnacles, and buttresses, and conventional mouldings, and disguise of nature by monstrous imaginings—not a school of truth at all. I think I shall be able, even in the little time we have to-night, to show that this is not so; and that our great law holds just as good at Amiens and Salisbury as it does at Athens and Florence.

I will go back then first to the very beginnings of Gothic art, and before you, the students of Kensington, as an impanelled jury, I will bring two examples of the barbarism out of which Gothic art emerges approximately contemporary in date and parallel in executive skill; but, the one, a barbarism that did not get on, and could not get on; the other, a barbarism that could get on, and did get on; and



you, the impanelled jury, shall judge what is the essential difference between the two barbarisms, and decide for yourselves what is the seed of life in the one, and the sign of death in the other.

The first, that which has in it the sign of death, furnishes us at the same time with an illustration far too interesting to be passed by, of certain principles much depended on by our common modern designers. Taking up one of our architectural publications the other day, and opening it at random, I chanced upon this piece of information, put in rather curious English; but you shall have it as it stands—

“Aristotle asserts, that the greatest species of the beautiful are Order, Symmetry, and the Definite.”

I should tell you, however, that this statement is not given as authoritative; it is one example of various Architectural teachings, given in a report in the *Building Chronicle* for May, 1857, of a lecture on Proportion; in which the only thing the lecturer appears to have proved was that:—

“The system of dividing the diameter of the shaft of a column into parts for copying the ancient architectural remains of Greece and Rome, adopted by architects from Vitruvius (circa B.C. 25) to the present period, as a method for producing ancient architecture, is *entirely useless*, for the several parts of Grecian architecture cannot be reduced or subdivided by this system; neither does it apply to the architecture of Rome.”

Still, as far as I can make it out, the lecture appears to have been just one of those of which you will at present hear so many, the protests of architects who have no knowledge of sculpture—or of any other mode of expressing natural beauty—*against* natural beauty; and their endeavour to substitute mathematical proportions for the knowledge of life they do not possess, and the representation of life of which they are incapable. Now, this substitution of obedience to mathematical law for sympathy with observed life, is the first characteristic of the hopeless work of all ages; as such, you will find it eminently manifested in the specimen I have to give you of the hopeless Gothic barbarism; the barbarism from which nothing could emerge—for which no future was possible but extinction. The Aristotelian principles of the Beautiful are, you remember, Order, Symmetry, and the Definite. Here you have the three, in perfection, applied to the ideal of æa

angel, in a psalter of the eighth century, existing in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge.\*

Now, you see the characteristics of this utterly dead school are, first the wilful closing of its eyes to natural facts; for, however ignorant a person may be, he need only look at a human being to see that it has a mouth as well as eyes; and secondly, the endeavour to adorn or idealise natural fact according to its own notions; it puts red spots in the middle of the hands, and sharpens the thumbs, thinking to improve them. Here you have the most pure type possible of the principles of idealism in all ages: whenever people don't look at Nature, they always think they can improve her. You will also admire, doubtless, the exquisite result of the application of our great modern architectural principle of beauty—symmetry, or equal balance of part by part; you see even the eyes are made symmetrical—entirely round, instead of irregularly oval; and the iris is set properly in the middle, instead of—as Nature has absurdly put it—rather under the upper lid. You will also observe the “principle of the pyramid” in the general arrangement of the figure, and the value of “series” in the placing of the dots.



FIG. 1.

From this dead barbarism we pass to living barbarism—to work done by hands quite as rude, if not ruder, and by minds as uninformed; and yet work which in every line of it is prophetic of power, and has in it the sure dawn of day. You have often heard it said that Giotto was the founder of art in Italy. He was not: neither he, nor Giunta Pisano, nor Niccolo Pisano. They all laid strong hands to the work, and brought it first into aspect above ground; but the foundation had been laid for them by the builders of the Lombardic churches in the valleys of the Adda and the Arno. It is in the sculpture of the round arched churches of North Italy, bearing disputable dates, ranging from the eighth to the twelfth century, that you will find the lowest struck roots of the art of Titian and Raphael.† I go, therefore, to the church which is certainly

\* I copy this woodcut from Westwood's *Palæographia Sacra*.

† I have said elsewhere “the root of *all* art is struck in the thirteenth century.” This is quite true: but of course some of the *smallest* fibres run lower, as in this instance.

the earliest of these, St. Ambrogio, of Milan, said still to retain some portions of the actual structure from which St. Ambrose excluded Theodosius, and at all events furnishing the most archaic examples of Lombardic sculpture in North Italy. I do not venture to guess their date; they are barbarous enough for any day.

We find the pulpit of this church covered with interlacing patterns, closely resembling those of the manuscript at Cambridge, but among them is figure sculpture of a very different kind. It is wrought with mere incisions in the stone, of which the effect may be tolerably given by single lines in a drawing. Remember, therefore, for a moment—as characteristic of culminating Italian art—Michael Angelo's fresco of the "Temptation of Eve," in the Sistine chapel, and you will be more interested in seeing the birth of Italian art, illustrated by the same subject, from St. Ambrogio, of Milan, the "Serpent beguiling Eve."\*

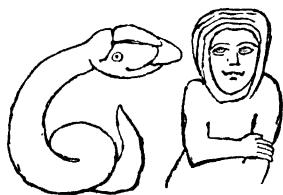


FIG. 2.

Yet, in that sketch, rude and ludicrous as it is, you have the elements of life in their first form. The people who could do that were sure to get on. For, observe, the workman's whole aim is straight at the facts, as well as he can get

them; and not merely at the facts, but at the very heart of the facts. A common workman might have looked at nature for his serpent, but he would have thought only of its scales. But this fellow does not want scales, nor coils; he can do without them; he wants the serpent's heart—malice, and insinuation; and he has actually got them to some extent. So also a common workman, even in this barbarous stage of art, might have carved Eve's arms and body a good deal better; but this man does not care about arms and body, if he can only get at Eve's mind—show that she is pleased at being flattered, and yet in a state of uncomfortable hesitation. And some look of listening, of complacency, and of embarrassment he has verily got; note the eyes slightly askance, the lips compressed, and the right hand

\* This cut is ruder than it should be; the incisions in the marble have a lighter effect than these rough black lines; but it is not worth while to do it better.

nervously grasping the left arm: nothing can be declared impossible to the people who could begin thus—the world is open to them, and all that is in it; while, on the contrary, nothing is possible to the man who did the symmetrical angel—the world is keyless to him; he has built a cell for himself in which he must abide, barred up for ever—there is no more hope for him than for a sponge or a madrepore.

I shall not trace from this embryo the progress of Gothic art in Italy, because it is much complicated and involved with traditions of other schools, and because most of the students will be less familiar with its results than with their own northern buildings. So, these two designs indicating Death and Life in the beginnings of mediæval art, we will take an example of the *progress* of that art from our northern work. Now, many of you, doubtless, have been interested by the mass, grandeur, and gloom of Norman architecture, as much as by Gothic traceries; and when you hear me say that the root of all good work lies in natural facts, you doubtless think instantly of your round arches, with their rude cushion capitals, and of the billet or zigzag work by which they are surrounded, and you cannot see what the knowledge of nature has to do with either the simple plan or the rude mouldings. But all those simple conditions of Norman art are merely the expiring of it towards the extreme north. Do not study Norman architecture in Northumberland, but in Normandy, and then you will find that it is just a peculiarly manly, and practically useful, form of the whole great French school of rounded architecture. And where has that French school its origin? Wholly in the rich conditions of sculpture, which, rising first out of imitations of the Roman bas-reliefs, covered all the façades of the French early churches with one continuous arabesque of floral or animal life. If you want to study round-arched buildings, do not go to Durham, but go to Poitiers, and there you will see how all the simple decorations which give you so much pleasure even in their isolated application were invented by persons practised in carving men, monsters, wild animals, birds, and flowers, in overwhelming redundancy; and then trace this architecture forward in central France, and you will find it loses nothing of its richness—it only gains in truth, and therefore in grace, until just at the moment of transition into the pointed style, you have the consummate type of the sculpture of the

school given you in the west front of the Cathedral of Chartres. From that front I have chosen two fragments to illustrate it.\*

These statues have been long, and justly, considered as representative of the highest skill of the twelfth or earliest part of the thirteenth century in France; and they indeed possess a dignity and delicate charm, which are for the most part wanting in later works. It is owing partly to real nobleness of feature, but chiefly to the grace, mingled with severity, of the falling lines of excessively *thin* drapery; as well as to a most studied finish in composition, every part of the ornamentation tenderly harmonising with the rest. So far as their power over certain tones of religious mind is owing to a palpable degree of non-naturalism in them, I do not praise it—the exaggerated thinness of body and stiffness of attitude are faults; but they are noble faults, and give the statues a strange look of forming part of the very building itself, and sustaining it—not like the Greek caryatid, without effort—nor like the Renaissance caryatid, by painful or impossible effort—but as if all that was silent, and stern, and withdrawn apart, and stiffened in chill of heart against the terror of earth, had passed into a shape of eternal marble; and thus the Ghost had given, to bear up the pillars of the church on earth, all the patient and expectant nature that it needed no more in heaven. This is the transcendental view of the meaning of those sculptures. I do not dwell upon it. What I do lean upon is their purely naturalistic and vital power. They are all portraits—unknown, most of them, I believe,—but palpably and unmistakably portraits, if not taken from the actual person for whom the statue stands, at all events studied from some living person whose features might fairly represent those of the king or saint intended. Several of them I suppose to be authentic: there is one of a queen, who has evidently, while she lived, been notable for her bright black eyes. The sculptor has cut the iris deep into the stone, and her dark eyes are still suggested with her smile.

There is another thing I wish you to notice specially in

\* This part of the lecture was illustrated by two drawings, made admirably by Mr. J. T. Laing, with the help of photographs from statues at Chartres. Any large photograph of the west front of Chartres will enable the reader to follow what is stated in the lecture, as far as is needful.

these statues—the way in which the floral moulding is associated with the vertical lines of the figure. You have thus the utmost complexity and richness of curvature set side by side with the pure and delicate parallel lines, and both the characters gain in interest and beauty; but there is deeper significance in the thing than that of mere effect in composition; significance not intended on the part of the sculptor, but all the more valuable because unintentional. I mean the close association of the beauty of lower nature in animals and flowers, with the beauty of higher nature in human form. You never get this in Greek work. Greek statues are always isolated; blank fields of stone, or depths of shadow, relieving the form of the statue, as the world of lower nature which they despised retired in darkness from their hearts. Here, the clothed figure seems the type of the Christian spirit—in many respects feebler and more contracted—but purer; clothed in its white robes and crown, and with the riches of all creation at its side.

The next step in the change will be set before you in a moment, merely by comparing this statue from the west front of Chartres with that of the Madonna, from the south transept door of Amiens.\*

This Madonna, with the sculpture round her, represents the culminating power of Gothic art in the thirteenth century. Sculpture has been gaining continually in the interval; gaining, simply because becoming every day more truthful, more tender, and more suggestive. By the way, the old Douglas motto, "Tender and true," may wisely be taken up again by all of us, for our own, in art no less than in other things. Depend upon it, the first universal characteristic of all great art is Tenderness, as the second is Truth. I find this more and more every day: an infinitude of tenderness is the chief gift and inheritance of all the truly great men. It is sure to involve a relative intensity of disdain towards base things, and an appearance of sternness and arrogance in the eyes of all hard, stupid, and vulgar people—quite terrific to such, if they are capable of terror, and hateful to them, if they are capable of nothing higher than hatred. Dante's is the great type of this class of mind. I say the *first* inheritance is Tenderness—the *second* Truth, because the Tenderness is in the make of the creature, the

\* \* There are many photographs of this door and of its central statue. Its sculpture in the tympanum is further described in Lecture IV.

Truth in his acquired habits and knowledge: besides, the love comes first in dignity as well as in time, and that is always pure and complete: the truth, at best, imperfect.

To come back to our statue. You will observe that the arrangement of this sculpture is exactly the same as at Chartres—severe falling drapery, set off by rich floral ornament at the side; but the statue is now completely animated: it is no longer fixed as an upright pillar, but bends aside out of its niche, and the floral ornament, instead of being a conventional wreath, is of exquisitely arranged hawthorn. The work, however, as a whole, though perfectly characteristic of the advance of the age in style and purpose, is in some subtler qualities inferior to that of Chartres. The individual sculptor, though trained in a more advanced school, has been himself a man of inferior order of mind compared to the one who worked at Chartres. But I have not time to point out to you the subtler characters by which I know this.

This statue, then, marks the culminating point of Gothic art, because, up to this time, the eyes of its designers had been steadily fixed on natural truth—they had been advancing from flower to flower, from form to form, from face to face—gaining perpetually in knowledge and veracity—therefore, perpetually in power and in grace. But at this point a fatal change came over their aim. From the statue they now began to turn the attention chiefly to the niche of the statue, and from the floral ornament to the mouldings that enclosed the floral ornament. The first result of this was, however, though not the grandest, yet the most finished of northern genius. You have, in the earlier Gothic, less wonderful construction, less careful masonry, far less expression of harmony of parts in the balance of the building. Earlier work always has more or less of the character of a good solid wall with irregular holes in it, well carved wherever there was room. But the last phase of good Gothic has no room to spare; it rises as high as it can on narrowest foundation, stands in perfect strength with the least possible substance in its bars; connects niche with niche, and line with line, in an exquisite harmony, from which no stone can be removed, and to which you can add not a pinnacle; and yet introduces in rich, though now more calculated profusion, the living element of its sculpture: sculpture in the

quatre-foils—sculpture in the brackets—sculpture in the gargoyles—sculpture in the niches—sculpture in the ridges and hollows of its mouldings—not a shadow without meaning, and not a light without life.\* But with this very perfection of his work came the unhappy pride of the builder in what he had done. As long as he had been merely raising clumsy walls and carving them, like a child, in waywardness of fancy, his delight was in the things he thought of as he carved; but when he had once reached this pitch of constructive science, he began to think only how cleverly he could put the stones together. The question was not now with him, What can I represent? but, How high can I build—how wonderfully can I hang this arch in air, or weave this tracery across the clouds? And the catastrophe was instant and irrevocable. Architecture became in France a mere web of waving lines—in England a mere grating of perpendicular ones. Redundance was substituted for invention, and geometry for passion; the Gothic art became a mere expression of wanton expenditure, and vulgar mathematics; and was swept away, as it then deserved to be swept away, by the severer pride, and purer learning, of the schools founded on classical traditions.

You cannot now fail to see how, throughout the history of this wonderful art—from its earliest dawn in Lombardy to its last catastrophe in France and England—*sculpture*, founded on love of nature, was the talisman of its existence; wherever sculpture was practised, architecture arose—wherever that was neglected, architecture expired; and, believe me, all you students who love this mediæval art, there is no hope of your ever doing any good with it, but on this everlasting principle. Your patriotic associations with it are of no use; your romantic associations with it—either of chivalry or religion—are of no use; they are worse than useless, they are false. Gothic is not an art for knights and nobles; it is an art for the people: it is not an art for churches or sanctuaries; it is an art for houses and homes: it is not an art for England only, but an art for the world:

\* The two *transepts* of Rouen Cathedral illustrate this style. There are plenty of photographs of them. I take this opportunity of repeating what I have several times before stated, for the sake of travellers, that St. Ouen, impressive as it is, is entirely inferior to the transepts of Rouen Cathedral.



above all, it is not an art of form or tradition only, but an art of vital practice and perpetual renewal. And whosoever pleads for it as an ancient or a formal thing, and tries to teach it you as an ecclesiastical tradition or a geometrical science, knows nothing of its essence, less than nothing of its power.

Leave, therefore, boldly, though not irreverently, mysticism and symbolism on the one side; cast away with utter scorn geometry and legalism on the other; seize hold of God's hand, and look full in the face of His creation, and there is nothing He will not enable you to achieve.

Thus, then, you will find—and the more profound and accurate your knowledge of the history of art the more assuredly you will find—that the living power in all the real schools, be they great or small, is love of Nature. But do not mistake me by supposing that I mean this law to be all that is necessary to form a school. There needs to be much superadded to it, though there never must be anything superseding it. The main thing which needs to be super-added is the gift of design.

It is always dangerous, and liable to diminish the clearness of impression, to go over much ground in the course of one lecture. But I dare not present you with a maimed view of this important subject: I dare not put off to another time, when the same persons would not be again assembled, the statement of the great collateral necessity which, as well as the necessity of truth, governs all noble art.

That collateral necessity is *the visible operation of human intellect in the presentation of truth*, the evidence of what is properly called design or plan in the work, no less than of veracity. A looking-glass does not design—it receives and communicates indiscriminately all that passes before it; a painter designs when he chooses some things, refuses others, and arranges all.

This selection and arrangement must have influence over everything that the art is concerned with, great or small—over lines, over colours, and over ideas. Given a certain group of colours, by adding another colour at the side of them, you will either improve the group and render it more delightful, or injure it, and render it discordant and unintelligible. “Design” is the choosing and placing the colour so as to help and enhance all the other colours it is set aside. So of thoughts: in a good composition, every

idea is presented in just that order, and with just that force, which will perfectly connect it with all the other thoughts in the work, and will illustrate the others as well as receive illustration from them; so that the entire chain of thoughts offered to the beholder's mind shall be received by him with as much delight and with as little effort as is possible. And thus you see design, properly so called, is human invention, consulting human capacity. Out of the infinite heap of things around us in the world, it chooses a certain number which it can thoroughly grasp, and presents this group to the spectator in the form best calculated to enable him to grasp it also, and to grasp it with delight.

And accordingly, the capacities of both gatherer and receiver being limited, the object is to make *everything that you offer helpful* and precious. If you give one grain of weight too much, so as to increase fatigue without profit, or bulk without value—that added grain is hurtful: if you put one spot or one syllable out of its proper place, that spot or syllable will be destructive—how far destructive it is almost impossible to tell: a misplaced touch may sometimes annihilate the labour of hours. Nor are any of us prepared to understand the work of any great master, till we feel this, and feel it as distinctly as we do the value of arrangement in the notes of music. Take any noble musical air, and you find, on examining it, that not one even of the faintest or shortest notes can be removed without destruction to the whole passage in which it occurs; and that every note in the passage is twenty times more beautiful so introduced, than it would have been if played singly on the instrument. Precisely this degree of arrangement and relation must exist between every touch \* and line in a great picture. You may consider the whole as a prolonged musical composition: its parts, as separate airs connected in the story; its little bits and fragments of colour and line, as separate passages or bars in melodies; and down to the minutest note of the whole—down to the minutest *touch*,—if there is one that can be spared—that one is doing mischief.

Remember therefore always, you have two characters in which all greatness of art consists: First, the earnest and intense seizing of natural facts; then the ordering those facts by strength of human intellect, so as to make them, for

\* \* Literally. I know how exaggerated this statement sounds: but I mean it—every syllable of it.—See Appendix IV. p. 141. •

all who look upon them, to the utmost serviceable, memorable, and beautiful. And thus great art is nothing else than the type of strong and noble life; for, as the ignoble person, in his dealings with all that occurs in the world about him, first sees nothing clearly—looks nothing fairly in the face, and then allows himself to be swept away by the trampling torrent, and unescapable force, of the things that he would not foresee, and could not understand: so the noble person, looking the facts of the world full in the face, and fathoming them with deep faculty, then deals with them in unalarmed intelligence and unhurried strength, and becomes, with his human intellect and will, no unconscious nor insignificant agent in consummating their good, and restraining their evil.

Thus in human life you have the two fields of rightful toil for ever distinguished, yet for ever associated; Truth first—plan, or design, founded thereon: so in art, you have the same two fields for ever distinguished, for ever associated; Truth first—plan, or design, founded thereon.

Now hitherto there is not the least difficulty in the subject; none of you can look for a moment at any great sculptor or painter without seeing the full bearing of these principles. But a difficulty arises when you come to examine the art of a lower order, concerned with furniture and manufacture, for in that art the element of design enters without, apparently, the element of truth. You have often to obtain beauty and display invention without direct representation of nature. Yet, respecting all these things also, the principle is perfectly simple. If the designer of furniture, of cups and vases, of dress patterns, and the like, exercises himself continually in the imitation of natural form in some leading division of his work; then, holding by this stem of life, he may pass down into all kinds of merely geometrical or formal design with perfect safety, and with noble results.\* Thus Giotto, being primarily a figure-painter and sculptor, is, secondarily, the richest of all designers in mere mosaic of coloured bars and triangles; thus Benvenuto Cellini, being in all the higher branches of metal-work a perfect imitator of Nature, is in all its lower branches the best designer of curve for lips of cups and handles of vases; thus Holbein, exercised primarily in the

\* This principle, here cursorily stated, is one of the chief subjects of inquiry in the following Lectures.

noble art of truthful portraiture, becomes, secondarily, the most exquisite designer of embroideries of robe, and blazonries on wall; and thus Michael Angelo, exercised primarily in the drawing of body and limb, distributes in the mightiest masses the order of his pillars, and in the loftiest shadow the hollows of his dome. But once quit hold of this living stem, and set yourself to the designing of ornamentation, either in the ignorant play of your own heartless fancy, as the Indian does, or according to received application of heartless laws, as the modern European does, and there is but one word for you—Death: death of every healthy faculty, and of every noble intelligence, incapacity of understanding one great work that man has ever done, or of doing anything that it shall be helpful for him to behold. You have cut yourselves off voluntarily, presumptuously, insolently, from the whole teaching of your Maker in His universe; you have cut yourselves off from it, not because you were forced to mechanical labour for your bread—not because your fate had appointed you to wear away your life in walled chambers, or dig your life out of dusty furrows; but, when your whole profession, your whole occupation—all the necessities and chances of your existence, led you straight to the feet of the great Teacher, and thrust you into the treasury of His works; where you have nothing to do but to live by gazing, and to grow by wondering—wilfully you bind up your eyes from the splendour—wilfully bind up your life-blood from its beating—wilfully turn your backs upon all the majesties of Omnipotence—wilfully snatch your hands from all the aids of love; and what can remain for you, but helplessness and blindness, except the worse fate than the being blind yourselves—that of becoming Leaders of the blind?

Do not think that I am speaking under excited feeling, or in any exaggerated terms. I have *written* the words I use, that I may know what I say, and that you, if you choose, may see what I have said. For, indeed, I have set before you to-night, to the best of my power, the sum and substance of the system of art to the promulgation of which I have devoted my life hitherto, and intend to devote what of life may still be spared to me. I have had but one steady aim in all that I have ever tried to teach, namely—to declare that whatever was great in human art was the expression of man's delight in God's work. •

And at this time I have endeavoured to prove to you—if you investigate the subject you may more entirely prove to yourselves—that no school ever advanced far which had not the love of natural fact as a primal energy. But it is still more important for you to be assured that the conditions of life and death in the art of nations are also the conditions of life and death in your own; and that you have it, each in his power at this very instant, to determine in which direction his steps are turning. It seems almost a terrible thing to tell you, that all here have all the power of knowing at once what hope there is for them as artists; you would, perhaps, like better that there was some unremovable doubt about the chances of the future—some possibility that you might be advancing, in unconscious ways, towards unexpected successes—some excuse or reason for going about, as students do so often, to this master or the other, asking him if they have genius, and whether they are doing right, and gathering, from his careless or formal replies, vague flashes of encouragement or fitfulnesses of despair. There is no need for this—no excuse for it. All of you have the trial of yourselves in your own power; each may undergo at this instant, before his own judgment seat, the ordeal by fire. Ask yourselves what is the leading motive which actuates you while you are at work. I do not ask you what your leading motive is for working—that is a different thing; you may have families to support—parents to help—brides to win; you may have all these, or other such sacred and pre-eminent motives, to press the morning's labour and prompt the twilight thought. But when you are fairly *at the work*, what is the motive then which tells upon every touch of it? If it is the love of that which your work represents—if, being a landscape painter, it is love of hills and trees that moves you—if, being a figure painter, it is love of human beauty and human soul that moves you—if, being a flower or animal painter, it is love, and wonder, and delight in petal and in limb that move you, then the Spirit is upon you, and the earth is yours, and the fulness thereof. But if, on the other hand, it is petty self-complacency in your own skill, trust in precepts and laws, hope for academical or popular approbation, or avarice of wealth—it is quite possible that by steady industry, or even by fortunate chance, you may win the applause, the position, the fortune, that you desire—but one touch of true art

you will never lay on canvas or on stone as long as you live.

Make, then, your choice, boldly and consciously, for one way or other it *must* be made. On the dark and dangerous side are set, the pride which delights in self-contemplation—the indolence which rests in unquestioned forms—the ignorance that despises what is fairest among God's creatures and the dulness that denies what is marvellous in His working: there is a life of monotony for your own souls, and of misguiding for those of others. And, on the other side, is open to your choice the life of the crowned spirit, moving as a light in creation—discovering always—illuminating always, gaining every hour in strength, yet bowed down every hour into deeper humility; sure of being right in its aim, sure of being irresistible in its progress; happy in what it has securely done—happier in what, day by day, it may as securely hope; happiest at the close of life, when the right hand begins to forget its cunning, to remember, that there was never a touch of the chisel or the pencil it wielded, but has added to the knowledge and quickened the happiness of mankind.

## LECTURE II

### THE UNITY OF ART

It is sometimes my pleasant duty to visit other cities, in the hope of being able to encourage their art students; but here \* it is my pleasanter privilege to come for encouragement myself. I do not know when I have received so much as from the report read this evening by Mr. Hammersley, bearing upon a subject which has caused me great anxiety. For I have always felt in my own pursuit of art, and in my endeavours to urge the pursuit of art on others, that while there are many advantages now that never existed before, there are certain grievous difficulties existing, just in the very cause that is giving the stimulus to art—in the immense spread of the manufactures of every country which is now attending vigorously to art. We find that manufacture and art are now going on always together; that where there is no manufacture there is no art. I know how much there is of pretended art where there is no manufacture: there is much in Italy, for instance; no country makes so bold pretence to the production of new art as Italy at this moment; yet no country produces so little. If you glance over the map of Europe, you will find that where the manufactures are strongest, there art also is strongest. And yet I always felt that there was an immense difficulty to be encountered by the students who were in these centres of modern movement. They had to avoid the notion that art and manufacture were in any respect one. Art may be healthily associated with manufacture, and probably in future will always be so; but the student must be strenuously warned against supposing that they can ever be one and the same thing, that art can ever be followed on the principles of manufacture. Each must be followed separately; the one must influence the other, but each must be kept distinctly separate from the other.

\* [Manchester.]

It would be well if all students would keep clearly in their mind the real distinction between those words which we use so often, "Manufacture," "Art," and "Fine Art." "MANUFACTURE" is, according to the etymology and right use of the word, "the making of anything by hands," directly or indirectly, with or without the help of instruments or machines. Anything proceeding from the hand of man is manufacture; but it must have proceeded from his hand only, acting mechanically, and uninfluenced at the moment by direct intelligence.

Then, secondly, ART is the operation of the hand and the intelligence of man together: there is an art of making machinery; there is an art of building ships; an art of making carriages; and so on. All these, properly called Arts, but not Fine Arts, are pursuits in which the hand of man and his head go together, working at the same instant.

Then FINE ART is that in which the hand, the head, and the *heart* of man go together.

Recollect this triple group; it will help you to solve many difficult problems. And remember that though the hand must be at the bottom of everything, it must also go to the top of everything; for Fine Art must be produced by the hand of man in a much greater and clearer sense than manufacture is. Fine Art must always be produced by the subtlest of all machines, which is the human hand. No machine yet contrived, or hereafter contrivable, will ever equal the fine machinery of the human fingers. Thoroughly perfect art is that which proceeds from the heart, which involves all the noble emotions; associates with these the head, yet as inferior to the heart; and the hand, yet as inferior to the heart and head; and thus brings out the whole man.

Hence it follows that since Manufacture is simply the operation of the hand of man in producing that which is useful to him, it essentially separates itself from the emotions; when emotions interfere with machinery they spoil it: machinery must go evenly, without emotion. But the Fine Arts cannot go evenly; they always must have emotion ruling their mechanism, and until the pupil begins to feel, and until all he does associates itself with the current of his feeling, he is not an artist. But pupils in all the schools in this country are now exposed to all kinds of temptations which blunt their feelings. I constantly feel discouraged in



addressing them because I know not how to tell them boldly what they ought to do, when I feel how practically difficult it is for them to do it. There are all sorts of demands made upon them in every direction, and money is to be made in every conceivable way but the right way. If you paint as you ought, and study as you ought, depend upon it the public will take no notice of you for a long while. If you study wrongly, and try to draw the attention of the public upon you—supposing you to be clever students—you will get swift reward; but the reward does not come fast when it is sought wisely; it is always held aloof for a little while; the right roads of early life are very quiet ones, hedged in from nearly all help or praise. But the wrong roads are noisy—vociferous everywhere with all kinds of demands upon you for art which is not properly art at all; and in the various meetings of modern interests, money is to be made in every way; but art is to be followed only in *one* way. That is what I want mainly to say to you, or if not to you yourselves (for, from what I have heard from your excellent master to-night, I know you are going on all rightly), you must let me say it through you to others. Our Schools of Art are confused by the various teaching and various interests that are now abroad among us. Everybody is talking about art, and writing about it, and more or less interested in it; everybody wants art, and there is not art for everybody, and few who talk know what they are talking about; thus students are led in all variable ways, while there is only one way in which they can make steady progress, for true art is always and will be always one. Whatever changes may be made in the customs of society, whatever new machines we may invent, whatever new manufactures we may supply, Fine Art must remain what it was two thousand years ago, in the days of Phidias; two thousand years hence, it will be, in all its principles, and in all its great effects upon the mind of man, just the same. Observe this that I say, please, carefully, for I mean it to the very utmost. *There is but one right way of doing any given thing required of an artist*; there may be a hundred wrong, deficient, or mannered ways, but there is only one complete and right way. Whenever two artists are trying to do the same thing with the same materials, and do it in different ways, one of them is wrong; he may be charmingly wrong, or impressively wrong—various circumstances in his temper may make his

wrong pleasanter than any person's right; it may for him, under his given limitations of knowledge or temper, be better perhaps that he should err in his own way than try for anybody else's—but for all that his way *is* wrong, and it is essential for all masters of schools to know what the right way is, and what right art is, and to see how simple and how single all right art has been, since the beginning of it.

But farther, not only is there but one way of *doing* things rightly, but there is only one way of *seeing* them, and that is seeing the whole of them, without any choice, or more intense perception of one point than another, owing to our special idiosyncrasies. Thus, when Titian or Tintoret look at a human being, they see at a glance the whole of its nature, outside and in; all that it has of form, of colour, of passion, or of thought; saintliness, and loveliness; fleshy body, and spiritual power; grace, or strength, or softness, or whatsoever other quality, those men will see to the full, and so paint, that, when narrower people come to look at what they have done, every one may, if he chooses, find his own special pleasure in the work. The sensualist will find sensuality in Titian; the thinker will find thought; the saint, sanctity; the colourist, colour; the anatomist, form; and yet the picture will never be a popular one in the full sense, for none of these narrower people will find their special taste so alone consulted, as that the qualities which would ensure their gratification shall be shifted or separated from others; they are checked by the presence of the other qualities which ensure the gratification of other men. Thus, Titian is not soft enough for the sensualist—Correggio suits him better; Titian is not defined enough for the formalist—Leonardo suits him better; Titian is not pure enough for the religionist—Raphael suits him better; Titian is not polite enough for the man of the world—Vandyke suits him better; Titian is not forcible enough for the lover of the picturesque—Rembrandt suits him better. So Correggio is popular with a certain set, and Vandyke with a certain set, and Rembrandt with a certain set. All are great men, but of inferior stamp, and therefore Vandyke is popular, and Rembrandt is popular,\* but nobody cares much at heart about Titian; only there is a strong under-current of everlasting murmur about his name, which means

\* And Murillo, of all true painters the narrowest, feeblest, and most superficial, for those reasons the most popular.

the deep consent of all great men that he is greater than they—the consent of those who, having sat long enough at his feet, have found in that restrained harmony of his strength there are indeed depths of each balanced power more wonderful than all those separate manifestations in inferior painters: that there is a softness more exquisite than Correggio's, a purity loftier than Leonardo's, a force mightier than Rembrandt's, a sanctity more solemn even than Raffaele's.

Do not suppose that in saying this of Titian, I am returning to the old eclectic theories of Bologna; for all those eclectic theories, observe, were based, not upon an endeavour to unite the various characters of nature (which it is possible to do), but the various narrownesses of taste, which it is impossible to do. Rubens is not more vigorous than Titian, but less vigorous; but because he is so narrow-minded as to enjoy vigour only, he refuses to give the other qualities of nature, which would interfere with that vigour and with our perception of it. Again, Rembrandt is not a greater master of chiaroscuro than Titian; he is a less master, but because he is so narrow-minded as to enjoy chiaroscuro only, he withdraws from you the splendour of hue which would interfere with this, and gives you only the shadow in which you can at once feel it. Now all these specialities have their own charm in their own way; and there are times when the particular humour of each man is refreshing to us from its very distinctness; but the effort to add any other qualities to this refreshing one instantly takes away the distinctiveness, and therefore the exact character to be enjoyed in its appeal to a particular humour in us. Our enjoyment arose from a weakness meeting a weakness, from a partiality in the painter fitting to a partiality in us, and giving us sugar when we wanted sugar, and myrrh when we wanted myrrh; but sugar and myrrh are not meat: and when we want meat and bread, we must go to better men.

The eclectic schools endeavoured to unite these opposite partialities and weaknesses. They trained themselves under masters of exaggeration, and tried to unite opposite exaggerations. That was impossible. They did not see that the only possible eclecticism had been already accomplished; the eclecticism of temperance, which, by the restraint of force, gains higher force; and by the self-denial of delight,

gains higher delight. This you will find is ultimately the case with every true and right master; at first, while we are tyros in art, or before we have earnestly studied the man in question, we shall see little in him; or perhaps see, as we think, deficiencies; we shall fancy he is inferior to this man in that, and to the other man in the other; but as we go on studying him we shall find that he has got both that and the other; and both in a far higher sense than the man who seemed to possess those qualities in excess. Thus in Turner's lifetime, when people first looked at him, those who liked rainy weather, said he was not equal to Copley Fielding; but those who looked at Turner long enough found that he could be much more wet than Copley Fielding, when he chose. The people who liked force, said that "Turner was not strong enough for them; he was effeminate; they liked De Wint—nice strong tone; or Cox—great, greeny, dark masses of colour, solemn feeling of the freshness and depth of nature; they liked Cox—Turner was too hot for them." Had they looked long enough they would have found that he had far more force than De Wint, far more freshness than Cox when he chose—only united with other elements; and that he didn't choose to be cool, if nature had appointed the weather to be hot. The people who liked Prout said "Turner had not firmness of hand—he did not know enough about architecture—he was not picturesque enough." Had they looked at his architecture long, they would have found that it contained subtle picturesquenesses, infinitely more picturesque than anything of Prout's. People who liked Callcott said that "Turner was not correct or pure enough—had no classical taste." Had they looked at Turner long enough they would have found him as severe, when he chose, as the greater Poussin—Callcott, a mere vulgar imitator of other men's high breeding. And so throughout with all thoroughly great men, their strength is not seen at first, precisely because they unite, in due place and measure, every great quality.

Now the question is, whether, as students, we are to study only these mightiest men, who unite all greatness, or whether we are to study the works of inferior men, who present us with the greatness which we particularly like? That question often comes before me when I see a strong idiosyncrasy in a student, and he asks me what he should study. Shall I send him to a true master, who does not

present the quality in a prominent way in which that student delights, or send him to a man with whom he has direct sympathy? It is a hard question. For very curious results have sometimes been brought out, especially in late years, not only by students following their own bent, but by their being withdrawn from teaching altogether. I have just named a very great man in his own field—Prout. We all know his drawings, and love them: they have a peculiar character which no other architectural drawings ever possessed, and which no others ever can possess, because all Prout's subjects are being knocked down, or restored (Prout did not like restored buildings any more than I do). There will never be any more Prout drawings. Nor could he have been what he was, or expressed with that mysteriously effective touch that peculiar delight in broken and old buildings, unless he had been withdrawn from all high art influence. You know that Prout was born of poor parents—that he was educated down in Cornwall; and that, for many years, all the art-teaching he had was his own, or the fishermen's. Under the keels of the fishing-boats, on the sands of our southern coasts, Prout learned all he needed to learn about art. Entirely by himself, he felt his way to this particular style, and became the painter of pictures which I think we should all regret to lose. It becomes a very difficult question what that man would have been, had he been brought under some entirely wholesome artistic influence. He had immense gifts of composition. I do not know any man who had more power of invention than Prout, or who had a sublimer instinct in his treatment of things; but being entirely withdrawn from all artistical help, he blunders his way to that shortcoming representation, which, by the very reason of its shortcoming, has a certain charm we should all be sorry to lose. And therefore I feel embarrassed when a student comes to me, in whom I see a strong instinct of that kind: and cannot tell whether I ought to say to him, "Give up all your studies of old boats, and keep away from the seashore, and come up to the Royal Academy in London, and look at nothing but Titian." It is a difficult thing to make up one's mind to say that. However, I believe, on the whole, we may wisely leave such matters in the hands of Providence; that if we had the power of teaching the right to anybody, we should teach them the right; if we have the power of

showing them the best thing, we should show them the best thing; there will always, I fear, be enough want of teaching, and enough bad teaching, to bring out very curious erratical results if we want them. So, if we are to teach at all, let us teach the right thing, and ever the right thing. There are many attractive qualities inconsistent with rightness—do not let us teach them—let us be content to waive them. There are attractive qualities in Burns, and attractive qualities in Dickens, which neither of those writers would have possessed if the one had been educated, and the other had been studying higher nature than that of cockney London; but those attractive qualities are not such as we should seek in a school of literature. If we want to teach young men a good manner of writing, we should teach it from Shakspeare—not from Burns; from Walter Scott—and not from Dickens. And I believe that our schools of painting are at present inefficient in their action, because they have not fixed on this high principle what are the painters to whom to point; nor boldly resolved to point to the best, if determinable. It is becoming a matter of stern necessity that they should give a simple direction to the attention of the student, and that they should say, “This is the mark you are to aim at; and you are not to go about to the print-shops, and peep in, to see how this engraver does that, and the other engraver does the other, and how a nice bit of character has been caught by a new man, and why this odd picture has caught the popular attention. You are to have nothing to do with all that; you are not to mind about popular attention just now; but here is a thing which is eternally right and good: you are to look at that, and see if you cannot do something eternally right and good too.”

But suppose you accept this principle; and resolve to look to some great man, Titian, or Turner, or whomsoever it may be, as the model of perfection in art—then the question is, since this great man pursued his art in Venice, or in the fields of England, under totally different conditions from those possible to us now—how are you to make your study of him effective here in Manchester? how bring it down into patterns, and all that you are called upon as operatives to produce? How make it the means of your livelihood, and associate inferior branches of art with this great art? That may become a serious doubt to you. You may think there is some other way of producing clever, and pretty, and sale-

able patterns than going to look at Titian, or any other great man. And that brings me to the question, perhaps the most vexed question of all amongst us just now, between conventional and perfect art. You know that among architects and artists there are, and have been almost always, since art became a subject of much discussion, two parties, one maintaining that Nature should be always altered and modified, and that the artist is greater than Nature; they do not maintain, indeed, in words, but they maintain in idea, that the artist is greater than the Divine Maker of these things, and can improve them; while the other party says that he cannot improve Nature, and that Nature on the whole should improve him. That is the real meaning of the two parties, the essence of them; the practical result of their several theories being that the Idealists are always producing more or less formal conditions of art, and the Realists striving to produce in all their art either some image of Nature, or record of Nature; these, observe, being quite different things, the image being a resemblance, and the record, something which will give information about Nature, but not necessarily imitate it.

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You may separate these two groups of artists more distinctly in your mind as those who seek for the pleasure of art, in the relations of its colours and lines, without caring to convey any truth with it; and those who seek for the truth first, and then go down from the truth to the pleasure of colour and line. Marking those two bodies distinctly as separate, and thinking over them, you may come to some rather notable conclusions respecting the mental dispositions which are involved in each mode of study. You will find that large masses of the art of the world fall definitely under one or the other of these heads. Observe, pleasure first and truth afterwards (or not at all), as with the Arabians and Indians; or, truth first and pleasure afterwards, as with Angelico and all other great European painters. You will find that the art whose end is pleasure only is pre-eminently the gift of cruel and savage nations, cruel in temper, savage in habits and conception; but that the art which is especially dedicated to natural fact always indicates a peculiar gentleness and tenderness of mind, and

\* The portion of the lecture here omitted was a recapitulation of that part of the previous one which opposed conventional art to natural art.

that all great and successful work of that kind will assuredly be the production of thoughtful, sensitive, earnest, kind men, large in their views of life, and full of various intellectual power. And farther, when you examine the men in whom the gifts of art are variously mingled, or universally mingled, you will discern that the ornamental, or pleasurable power, though it may be possessed by good men, is not in itself an indication of their goodness, but is rather, unless balanced by other faculties, indicative of violence of temper, inclining to cruelty and to irreligion. On the other hand, so sure as you find any man endowed with a keen and separate faculty of representing natural fact, so surely you will find that man gentle and upright, full of nobleness and breadth of thought. I will give you two instances, the first peculiarly English, and another peculiarly interesting because it occurs among a nation not generally very kind or gentle.

I am inclined to think that, considering all the disadvantages of circumstances and education under which his genius was developed there was perhaps hardly ever born a man with a more intense and innate gift of insight into nature than our own Sir Joshua Reynolds. Considered as a painter of individuality in the human form and mind, I think him, even as it is, the prince of portrait painters. Titian paints nobler pictures, and Vandyke had nobler subjects, but neither of them entered so subtly as Sir Joshua did into the minor varieties of human heart and temper; and when you consider that, with a frightful conventionality of social habitude all around him, he yet conceived the simplest types of all feminine and childish loveliness—that in a northern climate, and with grey, and white, and black, as the principal colours around him, he yet became a colourist who can be crushed by none, even of the Venetians—and that with Dutch painting and Dresden china for the prevailing types of art in the saloons of his day, he threw himself at once at the feet of the great masters of Italy, and arose from their feet to share their throne—I know not that in the whole history of art you can produce another instance of so strong, so unaided, so unerring an instinct for all that was true, pure, and noble.

Now, do you recollect the evidence respecting the character of this man—the two points of bright peculiar evidence given by the sayings of the two greatest literary men of his day, Johnson and Goldsmith? Johnson, who, as you know,



was always Reynolds' attached friend, had but one complaint to make against him, that he hated nobody: "Reynolds," he said, "you hate no one living: I like a good hater!" Still more significant is the little touch in Goldsmith's "Retaliation." You recollect how in that poem he describes the various persons who met at one of their dinners at St. James's Coffee-house, each person being described under the name of some appropriate dish. You will often hear the concluding lines about Reynolds quoted:—

"He shifted his trumpet, etc." ;

less often, or at least less attentively, the preceding ones, far more important:—

"Still born to improve us in every part—  
His pencil our faces, his *manners* our heart ;

and never, the most characteristic touch of all, near the beginning:—

"Our dean shall be venison, just fresh from the plains ;  
Our Burke shall be tongue, with a garnish of brains ;  
To make out the dinner, full certain I am,  
That Rich is anchovy, and Reynolds is *lamb*."

The other painter whom I would give you as an instance of this gentleness is a man of another nation, on the whole I suppose one of the most cruel civilised nations in the world—the Spaniards. They produced but one great painter, only one; but he among the very greatest of painters, Velasquez. You would not suppose, from looking at Velasquez' portraits generally, that he was an especially kind or good man; you perceive a peculiar sternness about them; for they were as true as steel, and the persons whom he had to paint being not generally kind or good people, they were stern in expression, and Velasquez gave the sternness; but he had precisely the same intense perception of truth, the same marvellous instinct for the rendering of all natural soul and all natural form that our Reynolds had. Let me, then, read you his character as it is given by Mr. Stirling, of Keir:—

"Certain charges, of what nature we are not informed, brought against him after his death, made it necessary for his executor, Fuensalida, to refute them at a private audience granted to him by the King for that purpose. After listening to the defence of

his friend, Philip immediately made answer: 'I can believe all you say of the excellent disposition of Diego Velasquez.' Having lived for half his life in courts, he was yet capable both of gratitude and generosity, and in the misfortunes, he could remember the early kindness of Olivares. The friend of the exile of Loeches, it is just to believe that he was also the friend of the all-powerful favourite at Buenretiro. No mean jealousy ever influenced his conduct to his brother artists; he could afford not only to acknowledge the merits, but to forgive the malice, of his rivals. His character was of *that rare and happy kind, in which high intellectual power is combined with indomitable strength of will, and a winning sweetness of temper*, and which seldom fails to raise the possessor above his fellow-men, making his life a

"laurelled victory, and smooth success  
Be strewed before his feet."

I am sometimes accused of trying to make art too moral; yet, observe, I do not say in the least that in order to be a good painter you must be a good man; but I do say that in order to be a good natural painter there must be strong elements of good in the mind, however warped by other parts of the character. There are hundreds of other gifts of painting which are not at all involved with moral conditions, but this one, the perception of Nature, is never given but under certain moral conditions. Therefore, now you have it in your choice; here are your two paths for you: it is required of you to produce conventional ornament, and you may approach the task as the Hindoo does, and as the Arab did, without Nature at all, with the chance of approximating your disposition somewhat to that of the Hindoos and Arabs; or as Sir Joshua and Velasquez did, with, not the chance, but the certainty, of approximating your disposition, according to the sincerity of your effort—to the disposition of those great and good men.

And do you suppose you will lose anything by approaching your conventional art from this higher side? Not so. I called, with deliberate measurement of my expression, long ago, the decoration of the Alhambra "detestable," not merely because indicative of base conditions of moral being, but because merely as decorative work, however captivating in some respects, it is wholly wanting in the real, deep, and intense qualities of ornamental art. Noble conventional decoration belongs only to three periods. First, there is the conventional decoration of the Greeks, used in subordination to their sculpture. There are then the noble conventional

decoration of the early Gothic schools, and the noble conventional arabesque of the great Italian schools. All these were reached from above, all reached by stooping from a knowledge of the human form. Depend upon it you will find, as you look more and more into the matter, that good subordinate ornament has ever been rooted in a higher knowledge; and if you are again to produce anything that is noble, you must have the higher knowledge first, and descend to all lower service; condescend as much as you like—condescension never does any man any harm—but get your noble standing first. So then, without any scruple, whatever branch of art you may be inclined as a student here to follow—whatever you are to make your bread by, I say, so far as you have time and power, make yourself first a noble and accomplished artist; understand at least what noble and accomplished art is, and then you will be able to apply your knowledge to all service whatsoever.

I am now going to ask your permission to name the masters whom I think it would be well if we could agree, in our Schools of Art in England, to consider our leaders. The first and chief I will not myself presume to name; he shall be distinguished for you by the authority of those two great painters of whom we have just been speaking—Reynolds and Velasquez. You may remember that in your Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition the most impressive things were the works of those two men—nothing told upon the eye so much; no other pictures retained it with such a persistent power. Now, I have the testimony, first of Reynolds to Velasquez, and then of Velasquez to the man whom I want you to take as the master of all your English schools. The testimony of Reynolds to Velasquez is very striking. I take it from some fragments which have just been published by Mr. William Cotton—precious fragments—of Reynolds' diaries, which I chanced upon luckily as I was coming down here: for I was going to take Velasquez' testimony alone, and then fell upon this testimony of Reynolds to Velasquez, written most fortunately in Reynolds' own hand—you may see the manuscript—"What *we* are all," said Reynolds, "attempting to do with great labour, *Velasquez does it once.*" Just think what is implied when a man of the enormous power and facility that Reynolds had, says he was "trying to do with great labour," what Velasquez "did at once."

Having thus Reynolds' testimony to Velasquez, I will take Velasquez' testimony to somebody else. You know that Velasquez was sent by Philip of Spain, to Italy, to buy pictures for him. He went all over Italy, saw the living artists there, and all their best pictures when freshly painted, so that he had every opportunity of judging; and never was a man so capable of judging. He went to Rome and ordered various works of living artists; and, while there, he was one day asked by Salvator Rosa what he thought of Raphael. His reply, and the ensuing conversation, are thus reported by Boschini, in curious Italian verse, which, thus translated by Dr. Donaldson, is quoted in Mr. Stirling's *Life of Velasquez*:—

“The master [Velasquez] stiffly bowed his figure tall  
And said: ‘For Rafael, to speak the truth—  
I always was plain-spoken from my youth—  
I cannot say I like his works at all.’

“‘Well,’ said the other [Salvator], ‘if you can run down  
So great a man, I really cannot see  
What you can find to like in Italy;  
To him we all agree to give the crown.’

“Diego answered thus: ‘I saw in Venice  
The true test of the good and beautiful;  
First, in my judgment, ever stands that school,  
And Titian first of all Italian men is.’”

“*Tizian ze quel che porta la bandiera.*”

Learn that line by heart, and act, at all events for some time to come, upon Velasquez' opinion in that matter. Titian is much the safest master for you. Raphael's power, such as it was, and great as it was, depended wholly upon transcendental characters in his mind; it is “Raphael-esque,” properly so called; but Titian's power is simply the power of doing right. Whatever came before Titian, he did wholly as it *ought* to be done. Do not suppose that now, in recommending Titian to you so strongly, and speaking of nobody else to-night, I am retreating in anywise from what some of you may perhaps recollect in my works, the enthusiasm with which I have always spoken of another Venetian painter. There are three Venetians who are never separated in my mind—Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret. They all have their own unequalled gifts, and Tintoret

especially has imagination and depth of soul which I think renders him indisputably the greatest *man*; but, equally indisputably, Titian is the greatest painter; and therefore the greatest painter who ever lived. You may be led wrong by Tintoret\* in many respects, wrong by Raphael in more; all that you learn from Titian will be right. Then, with Titian, take Leonardo, Rembrandt, and Albert Dürer. I name those three masters for this reason: Leonardo has powers of subtle drawing which are peculiarly applicable in many ways to the drawing of fine ornament, and are very useful for all students. Rembrandt and Dürer are the only men whose actual work of hand you can have to look at; you can have Rembrandt's etchings, or Dürer's engravings actually hung in your schools; and it is a main point for the student to see the real thing, and avoid judging of masters at second-hand. As, however, in obeying this principle, you cannot often have opportunities of studying Venetian painting, it is desirable that you should have a useful standard of colour, and I think it is possible for you to obtain this. I cannot, indeed, without entering upon ground which might involve the hurting the feelings of living artists, state exactly what I believe to be the relative position of various painters in England at present with respect to power of colour. But I may say this, that in the peculiar gifts of colour which will be useful to you as students there are only one or two of the pre-Raphaelites, and William Hunt, of the old Water Colour Society, who would be safe guides for you; and as quite a safe guide, there is nobody but William Hunt, because the pre-Raphaelites are all more or less affected by enthusiasm and by various morbid conditions of intellect and temper; but old William Hunt—I am sorry to say “old,” but I say it in a loving way, for every year that has added to his life has added also to his skill—William Hunt is as right as the Venetians, as far as he goes, and what is more, nearly as inimitable as they. And I think if we manage to put in the principal schools of England a little bit of Hunt's work, and make that somewhat of a standard of colour, that we can apply his principles of colouring to subjects of all kinds. Until you have had a work of his long near you; nay, unless you have been labouring at it, and trying to copy it, you do not know the thoroughly grand qualities that are concentrated in it.

\* See Appendix I. p. 134: Right and Wrong.

Simplicity, and intensity, both of the highest character—simplicity of aim, and intensity of power and success, are involved in that man's unpretending labour.

Finally, you cannot believe that I would omit my own favourite, Turner. I fear from the very number of his works left to the nation, that there is a disposition now rising to look upon his vast bequest with some contempt. I beg of you, if in nothing else, to believe me in this, that you cannot further the art of England in any way more distinctly than by giving attention to every fragment that has been left by that man. The time will come when his full power and right place will be acknowledged; that time will not be for many a day yet: nevertheless, be assured—as far as you are inclined to give the least faith to anything I may say to you, be assured—that you can act for the good of art in England in no better way than by using whatever influence any of you have in any direction to urge the reverent study and yet more reverent preservation of the works of Turner. I do not say “the exhibition” of his works, for we are not altogether ripe for it: they are still too far above us; uniting, as I was telling you, too many qualities for us yet to feel fully their range and their influence—but let us only try to keep them safe from harm, and show thoroughly and conveniently what we show of them at all, and day by day their greatness will dawn upon us more and more, and be the root of a school of art in England, which I do not doubt may be as bright, as just, and as refined as even that of Venice herself. The dominion of the sea seems to have been associated, in past time, with dominion in the arts also: Athens had them together; Venice had them together; but by so much as our authority over the ocean is wider than theirs over the *Ægean* or *Adriatic*, let us strive to make our art more widely beneficent than theirs, though it cannot be more exalted; so working out the fulfilment, in their wakening as well as their warning sense, of those great words of the aged Tintoret:—

“*SEMPRE SI FA IL MARE MAGGIORE.*”

## LECTURE III

### MODERN MANUFACTURE AND DESIGN

It is with a deep sense of necessity for your indulgence that I venture to address you to-night, or that I venture at any time to address the pupils of schools of design intended for the advancement of taste in special branches of manufacture. No person is able to give useful and definite help towards such special applications of art, unless he is entirely familiar with the conditions of labour and natures of material involved in the work; and *indefinite* help is little better than no help at all. Nay, the few remarks which I propose to lay before you this evening will, I fear, be rather suggestive of difficulties than helpful in conquering them: nevertheless, it may not be altogether unserviceable to define clearly for you (and this, at least, I am able to do) one or two of the more stern general obstacles which stand at present in the way of our success in design; and to warn you against exertion of effort in any vain or wasteful way, till these main obstacles are removed.

The first of these is our not understanding the scope and dignity of Decorative design. With all our talk about it, the very meaning of the words "Decorative art" remains confused and undecided. I want, if possible, to settle this question for you to-night, and to show you that the principles on which you must work are likely to be false, in proportion as they are narrow; true, only as they are founded on a perception of the connection of all branches of art with each other.

Observe, then, first—the only essential distinction between Decorative and other art is the being fitted for a fixed place; and in that place, related, either in subordination or in command, to the effect of other pieces of art. And all the greatest art which the world has produced is thus fitted for a place, and subordinated to a purpose. There is

no existing highest-order art but is decorative. The best sculpture yet produced has been the decoration of a temple front—the best painting, the decoration of a room. Raphael's best doing is merely the wall-colouring of a suite of apartments in the Vatican, and his cartoons were made for tapestries. Correggio's best doing is the decoration of two small church cupolas at Parma; Michael Angelo's, of a ceiling in the Pope's private chapel; Tintoret's, of a ceiling and side wall belonging to a charitable society at Venice; while Titian and Veronese threw out their noblest thoughts, not even on the inside, but on the outside, of the common brick and plaster walls of Venice.

Get rid, then, at once of any idea of Decorative art being a degraded or a separate kind of art. Its nature or essence is simply its being fitted for a definite place; and, in that place, forming part of a great and harmonious whole, in companionship with other art; and so far from this being a degradation to it—so far from Decorative art being inferior to other art because it is fixed to a spot—on the whole it may be considered as rather a piece of degradation that it should be portable. Portable art—independent of all place—is for the most part ignoble art. Your little Dutch landscape, which you put over your sideboard to-day, and between the windows to-morrow, is a far more contemptible piece of work than the extents of field and forest with which Benozzo has made green and beautiful the once melancholy arcade of the Campo Santo at Pisa; and the wild boar of silver which you use for a seal, or lock into a velvet case, is little likely to be so noble a beast as the bronze boar who foams forth the fountain from under his tusks in the market-place of Florence. It is, indeed, possible that the portable picture or image may be first-rate of its kind, but it is not first-rate because it is portable; nor are Titian's frescoes less than first-rate because they are fixed; nay, very frequently the highest compliment you can pay to a cabinet picture is to say: "It is as grand as a fresco."

Keeping, then, this fact fixed in our minds—that all art *may* be decorative, and that the greatest art yet produced has been decorative—we may proceed to distinguish the orders and dignities of Decorative art, thus:

I. The first order of it is that which is meant for places where it cannot be disturbed or injured, and where it can be perfectly seen; and then the main parts of it should be,



and have always been made, by the great masters, as perfect, and as full of Nature as possible.

You will every day hear it absurdly said that room decoration should be by flat patterns—by dead colours—by conventional monotonies, and I know not what. Now, just be assured of this—nobody ever yet used conventional art to decorate with, when he could do anything better, and knew that what he did would be safe. Nay, a great painter will always give you the natural art, safe or not. Correggio gets a commission to paint a room on the ground floor of a palace at Parma: Any of our people—bred on our fine modern principles—would have covered it with a diaper, or with stripes or flourishes, or mosaic patterns. Not so Correggio: he paints a thick trellis of vine-leaves, with oval openings, and lovely children leaping through them into the room; and lovely children, depend upon it, are rather more desirable decorations than a diaper, if you can do them—but they are not quite so easily done. In like manner Tintoret has to paint the whole end of the Council Hall at Venice. An orthodox decorator would have set himself to make the wall look like a wall—Tintoret thinks it would be rather better, if he can manage it, to make it look a little like Paradise—stretches his canvas right over the wall, and his clouds right over his canvas; brings the light through his clouds—all blue and clear—zodiac beyond zodiac; rolls away the vaporous flood from under the feet of saints, leaving them at last in infinitudes of light—unorthodox in the last degree, but, on the whole, pleasant.

And so in all other cases whatever, the greatest decorative art is wholly unconventional—downright, pure, good painting and sculpture, but always fitted for its place; and subordinated to the purpose it has to serve in that place.

II. But if art is to be placed where it is liable to injury—to wear and tear; or to alteration of its form; as, for instance, on domestic utensils, and armour, and weapons, and dress; in which either the ornament will be worn out by the usage of the thing, or will be cast into altered shape by the play of its folds; then it is wrong to put beautiful and perfect art to such uses, and you want forms of inferior art, such as will be by their simplicity less liable to injury; or, by reason of their complexity and continuousness, may show to advantage, however distorted by the folds they are cast into.

And thus arise the various forms of inferior decorative art, respecting which the general law is, that the lower the place and office of the thing, the less of natural or perfect form you should have in it; a zigzag or a chequer is thus a better, because a more consistent, ornament for a cup or platter than a landscape or portrait is: hence the general definition of the true forms of conventional ornament is, that they consist in the bestowal of as much beauty on the object as shall be consistent with its Material, its Place, and its Office.

Let us consider these three modes of consistency a little.

(A) Conventionalism by cause of inefficiency of material.

If, for instance, we are required to represent a human figure with stone only, we cannot represent its colour; we reduce its colour to whiteness. That is not elevating the human body, but degrading it; only it would be a much greater degradation to give its colour falsely. Diminish beauty as much as you will, but do not misrepresent it. So again, when we are sculpturing a face, we can't carve its eyelashes. The face is none the better for wanting its eyelashes—it is injured by the want; but would be much more injured by a clumsy representation of them.

Neither can we carve the hair. We must be content with the conventionalism of vile solid knots and lumps of marble, instead of the golden cloud that encompasses the fair human face with its waving mystery. The lumps of marble are not an elevated representation of hair—they are a degraded one; yet better than any attempt to imitate hair with the incapable material.

In all cases in which such imitation is attempted, instant degradation to a still lower level is the result. For the effort to imitate shows that the workman has only a base and poor conception of the beauty of the reality—else he would know his task to be hopeless, and give it up at once: so that all endeavours to avoid conventionalism, when the material demands it, result from insensibility to truth, and are among the worst forms of vulgarity. Hence, in the greatest Greek statues, the hair is very slightly indicated, not because the sculptor disdained hair, but because he knew what it was too well to touch it insolently. I do not doubt but that the Greek painters drew hair exactly as Titian does. Modern

attempts to produce ~~mined~~ pictures on glass result from the same base vulgarism. No man who knows what painting means, can endure a painted glass window which emulates painter's work. But he rejoices in a glowing mosaic of broken colour: for that is what the glass has the special gift and right of producing.\*

(b) Conventionalism by cause of inferiority of place.

When work is to be seen at a great distance, or in dark places, or in some other imperfect way, it constantly becomes necessary to treat it coarsely or severely, in order to make it effective. The statues on cathedral fronts, in good times of design, are variously treated according to their distances: no fine execution is put into the features of the Madonna who rules the group of figures above the south transept of Rouen at 150 feet above the ground: but in base modern work, as Milan Cathedral, the sculpture is finished without any reference to distance; and the merit of every statue is supposed to consist in the visitor's being obliged to ascend three hundred steps before he can see it.

(c) Conventionalism by cause of inferiority of office.

When one piece of ornament is to be subordinated to another (as the moulding is to the sculpture it encloses, or the fringe of a drapery to the statue it veils), this inferior ornament needs to be degraded in order to mark its lower office; and this is best done by refusing, more or less, the introduction of natural form. The less of Nature it contains, the more degraded is the ornament, and the fitter for a humble place; but however far a great workman may go in refusing the higher organisms of Nature, he always takes care to retain the magnificence of natural lines; that is to say, of the infinite curves, such as I have analysed in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters*. His copyists, fancying that they can follow him without Nature, miss precisely the essence of all the work; so that even the simplest piece of Greek conventional ornament loses the whole of its value in any modern imitation of it, the finer curves being always missed. Perhaps one of the dullest and least justifiable mistakes which have yet been made about my writing is the supposition that I have attacked or despised Greek work. I have attacked Palladian work, and

\* See Appendix II. p. 139: Sir Joshua Reynolds' disappointment.

modern imitation of Greek work. Of Greek work itself I have never spoken but with a reverence quite infinite: I name Phidias always in exactly the same tone with which I speak of Michael Angelo, Titian, and Dante. My first statement of this faith, now thirteen years ago, was surely clear enough. "We shall see by this light three colossal images standing up side by side, looming in their great rest of spirituality above the whole world horizon. Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Dante—from these we may go down step by step among the mighty men of every age, securely and certainly observant of diminished lustre in every appearance of restlessness and effort, until the last trace of inspiration vanishes in the tottering affectation or tortured insanities of modern times" (*Modern Painters*, vol. ii., p. 63). This was surely plain speaking enough, and from that day to this my effort has been not less continually to make the heart of Greek work known than the heart of Gothic: namely, the nobleness of conception of form derived from perpetual study of the figure; and my complaint of the modern architect has been not that he followed the Greeks, but that he denied the first laws of life in theirs as in all other art.

The fact is, that all good subordinate forms of ornamentation ever yet existent in the world have been invented, and others as beautiful *can* only be invented, by men primarily exercised in drawing or carving the human figure. I will not repeat here what I have already twice insisted upon, to the students of London and of Manchester, respecting the degradation of temper and intellect which follows the pursuit of art without reference to natural form, as among the Asiatics: here, I will only trespass on your patience so far as to mark the inseparable connection between figure-drawing and good ornamental work, in the great European schools, and all that are connected with them.

Tell me, then, first of all, what ornamental work is usually put before our students as the type of decorative perfection? Raphael's arabesques; are they not? Well, Raphael knew a little about the figure, I suppose, before he drew them. I do not say that I like those arabesques; but there are certain qualities in them which are inimitable by modern designers; and those qualities are just the fruit of the master's figure study. What is given the student as next

to Raphael's work? Cinquecento ornament generally. Well, cinquecento generally, with its birds, and cherubs, and wreathed foliage, and clustered fruit, was the amusement of men who habitually and easily carved the figure, or painted it. All the truly fine specimens of it have figures or animals as main parts of the design.

"Nay, but," some anciently or mediævally minded person will exclaim, "we don't want to study cinquecento. We want severer, purer conventionalism." What will you have? Egyptian ornament. Why, the whole mass of it is made up of multitudinous human figures in every kind of action—and magnificent action; their kings drawing their bows in their chariots, their sheaves of arrows rattling at their shoulders; the slain falling under them as before a pestilence; their captives driven before them in astonished troops; and do you expect to imitate Egyptian ornament without knowing how to draw the figure? Nay, but you will take Christian ornament—purest mediæval Christian thirteenth century! Yes: and do you suppose you will find the Christian less human? The least natural and most purely conventional ornament of the Gothic schools is that of their painted glass; and do you suppose painted glass, in the fine times, was ever wrought without figures? We have got into the way, among our other modern wretchednesses, of trying to make windows of leaf diapers, and of strips of twisted red and yellow bands, looking like the patterns of currant jelly on the top of Christmas cakes; but every casement of old glass contained a saint's history. The windows of Bourges, Chartres, or Rouen have ten, fifteen, or twenty medallions in each, and each medallion contains two figures at least, often six or seven, representing every event of interest in the history of the saint whose life is in question. Nay, but, you say, those figures are rude and quaint, and ought not to be imitated. Why, so is the leafage rude and quaint, yet you imitate that. The coloured border pattern of geranium or ivy leaf is not one whit better drawn, or more like geraniums and ivy, than the figures are like figures; but you call the geranium leaf idealised—why don't you call the figures so? The fact is, neither are idealised, but both are conventionalised on the same principles, and in the same way; and if you want to learn how to treat the leafage, the only way is to learn first how to treat the figure. And you may soon test your powers in this

respect. Those old workmen were not afraid of the most familiar subjects. The windows of Chartres were presented by the trades of the town, and at the bottom of each window is a representation of the proceedings of the tradesmen at the business which enabled them to pay for the window. There are smiths at the forge, curriers at their hides, tanners looking into their pits, mercers selling goods over the counter—all made into beautiful medallions. Therefore, whenever you want to know whether you have got any real power of composition or adaptation in ornament, don't be content with sticking leaves together by the ends—anybody can do that; but try to conventionalise a butcher's or a greengrocer's, with Saturday night customers buying cabbage and beef. That will tell you if you can design or not.

I can fancy your losing patience with me altogether just now. "We asked this fellow down to tell our workmen how to make shawls, and he is only trying to teach them how to caricature." But have a little patience with me, and examine, after I have done, a little for yourselves into the history of ornamental art, and you will discover why I do this. You will discover, I repeat, that all great ornamental art whatever is founded on the effort of the workmen to draw the figure, and, in the best schools, to draw all that he saw about him in living nature. The best art of pottery is acknowledged to be that of Greece, and all the power of design exhibited in it, down to the merest zigzag, arises primarily from the workmen having been forced to outline nymphs and knights: from those helmed and draped figures he holds his power. Of Egyptian ornament I have just spoken. You have everything given there that the workman saw; people of his nation employed in hunting, fighting, fishing, visiting, making love, building, cooking—everything they did is drawn, magnificently or familiarly, as was needed. In Byzantine ornament, saints, or animals which are types of various spiritual power, are the main subjects: and from the church down to the piece of enamelled metal, figure—figure—figure, always principal. In Norman and Gothic work you have, with all their quiet saints, also other much disquieted persons, hunting, feasting, fighting, and so on; or whole hordes of animals racing after each other. In the Bayeux tapestry, Queen Matilda gave, as well as she could—in many respects graphically enough,

—the whole history of the Conquest of England. Thence, as you increase in power of art, you have more and more finished figures, up to the solemn sculptures of Wells Cathedral, or the cherubic enrichments of the Venetian Madonna del Miracoli. Therefore, I tell you fearlessly, for I know it is true, you must raise your workman up to life, or you will never get from him one line of well-imagined conventionalism. We have at present no good ornamental design. We can't have it yet, and we must be patient if we want to have it. Do not hope to feel the effect of your schools at once, but raise the men as high as you can, and then let them stoop as low as you need; no great man ever minds stooping. Encourage the students, in sketching accurately and continually from nature anything that comes in their way—still life, flowers, animals; but, above all, figures; and so far as you allow of any difference between an artist's training and theirs, let it be, not in what they draw, but in the degree of conventionalism you require in the sketch. For my own part, I should always endeavour to give thorough artistical training first; but I am not certain (the experiment being yet untried) what results may be obtained by a truly intelligent practice of conventional drawing, such as that of the Egyptians, Greeks, or thirteenth-century French, which consists in the utmost possible rendering of natural form by the fewest possible lines. The animal and bird drawing of the Egyptians is, in their fine age, quite magnificent under its conditions; magnificent in two ways—first, in keenest perception of the main forms and facts in the creature; and, secondly, in the grandeur of line by which their forms are abstracted and insisted on, making every asp, ibis, and vulture a sublime spectre of asp or ibis or vulture power. The way for students to get some of this gift again (*some only*, for I believe the fulness of the gift itself to be connected with vital superstition, and with resulting intensity of reverence: people were likely to know something about hawks and ibises, when to kill one was to be irrevocably judged to death) is never to pass a day without drawing some animal from the life, allowing themselves the fewest possible lines and colours to do it with, but resolving that whatever is characteristic of the animal shall in some way or other be shown.\* I repeat, it

\* Plate 75 in Vol. V. of Wilkinson's *Ancient Egypt* will give the student an idea of how to set to work.

cannot yet be judged what results might be obtained by a nobly practised conventionalism of this kind; but, however that may be, the first fact—the necessity of animal and figure drawing, is absolutely certain, and no person who shrinks from it will ever become a great designer. One great good arises even from the first step in figure drawing, that it gets the student quit at once of the notion of formal symmetry. If you learn only to draw a leaf well, you are taught in some of our schools to turn it the other way, opposite to itself; and the two leaves set opposite ways are called “a design”: and thus it is supposed possible to produce ornamentation, though you have no more brains than a looking-glass or a kaleidoscope has. But if once you learn to draw the human figure, you will find that knocking two men’s heads together does not necessarily constitute a good design; nay, that it makes a very bad design, or no design at all; and you will see at once that to arrange a group of two or more figures, you must, though perhaps it may be desirable to balance, or oppose them, at the same time vary their attitudes, and make one, not the reverse of the other, but the companion of the other.

I had a somewhat amusing discussion on this subject with a friend, only the other day; and one of his retorts upon me was so neatly put, and expresses so completely all that can either be said or shown on the opposite side, that it is well worth while giving it you exactly in the form it was sent to me. My friend had been maintaining that the essence of orna-

ment consisted in three things: contrast, series, and symmetry. I replied (by letter) that “none of them, nor all of them together would produce ornament.

FIG. 3. Here” (making a ragged blot with the back of my pen on the paper) “you have contrast; but it isn’t ornament; here—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6” (writing the numerals) “you have series; but it isn’t ornament: and here” (sketching this figure at the side) “you have symmetry; but it isn’t ornament.”

My friend replied: “Your materials were not ornament, because you did not apply them. I send them to you back, made up into a choice sporting neckerchief:



FIG. 4.



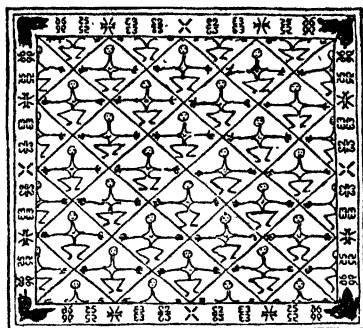


Fig. 5.

"Symmetrical figure . . .	Unit of diaper.
Contrast . . . . .	Corner ornaments.
Series . . . . .	Border ornaments.

"Each figure is converted into a harmony by being revolved on its two axes, the whole opposed in contrasting series."

My answer was—or rather was to the effect (for I must expand it a little here)—that his words, "because you did not apply them," contained the gist of the whole matter; that the application of them, or of any other things, was precisely the essence of design; the non-application, or wrong application, the negation of design: that his use of the poor materials was in this case admirable; and that, if he could explain to me, in clear words, the principles on which he had so used them, he would be doing a very great service to all students of art.

"Tell me, therefore" (I asked), "these main points:

"1. How did you determine the number of figures you would put into the neckerchief? Had there been more, it would have been mean and ineffective—a pepper-and-salt sprinkling of figures. Had there been fewer, it would have been monstrous. How did you fix the number?

"2. How did you determine the breadth of the border, and relative size of the numerals?

"3. Why are there two lines outside of the border, and one only inside? Why are there no more lines? Why not three and two, or three and five? Why lines at all to separate the barbarous figures; and why, if lines at all, not double or treble instead of single?

"4. Why did you put the double blots at the corners? Why not at the angles of the chequers, or in the middle of the border?

"It is precisely your knowing why *not* to do these things, and why to do just what you have done, which constituted your power of design; and like all the people I have ever known who had that power, you are entirely unconscious of the essential laws by which you work, and confuse other people by telling them that the design depends on symmetry and series, when, in fact, it depends entirely on your own sense and judgment."

This was the substance of my last answer—to which (as I knew beforehand would be the case) I got no reply; but it still remains to be observed that with all the skill and taste (especially involving the architect's great trust, harmony of proportion) which my friend could bring to bear on the materials given him, the result is still only—a sporting neckerchief—that is to say, the materials addressed, first, to recklessness, in the shape of a mere blot; then to computativeness, in a series of figures; and then to absurdity and ignorance, in the shape of an ill-drawn caricature—such materials, however treated, can only work up into what will please reckless, computative, and vulgar persons—that is to say, into a sporting neckerchief. The difference between this piece of ornamentation and Correggio's painting at Parma lies simply and wholly in the additions (some-what large ones) of truth and tenderness: in the drawing being lovely as well as symmetrical—and representative of realities as well as agreeably disposed. And truth, tenderness, and inventive application or disposition are indeed the roots or ornament—not contrast, nor symmetry.

It ought yet farther to be observed, that *the nobler the materials, the less their symmetry is endurable*. In the present case, the sense of fitness and order, produced by the repetition of the figures, neutralises, in some degree, their reckless vulgarity; and is wholly, therefore, beneficent to them. But draw the figures better, and their repetition will become painful. You may harmlessly balance a mere geometrical form, and oppose one quatrefoil or cusp by another exactly like it. But put two Apollo Belvideres back to back, and you will not think the symmetry improves them. *Whenever the materials of ornament are noble, they must be various*; and repetition of parts is either the sign

of utterly bad, hopeless, and base work; or of the intended degradation of the parts in which such repetition is allowed, in order to foil others more noble.

Such, then, are a few of the great principles by the enforcement of which you may hope to promote the success of the modern student of design; but remember, none of these principles will be useful at all, unless you understand them to be, in one profound and stern sense, useless.\*

That is to say, unless you feel that neither you nor I, nor any one, can, in the great ultimate sense, teach anybody how to make a good design.

If designing *could* be taught, all the world would learn; as all the world reads—or calculates. But designing is not to be spelled, nor summed. My men continually come to me, in my drawing class in London, thinking I am to teach them what is instantly to enable them to gain their bread. “Please, sir, show us how to design.” “Make designers of us.” And you, I doubt not, partly expect me to tell you to-night how to make designers of your Bradford youths. Alas! I could as soon tell you how to make or manufacture an ear of wheat, as to make a good artist of any kind. I can analyse the wheat very learnedly for you—tell you there is starch in it, and carbon, and silex. I can give you starch, and charcoal, and flint; but you are as far from your ear of wheat as you were before. All that can possibly be done for any one who wants ears of wheat is to show them where to find grains of wheat, and how to sow them, and then, with patience, in Heaven’s time, the ears will come—or will perhaps come—ground and weather permitting. So in this matter of making artists—first you must find your artist in the grain; then you must plant him; fence and weed the field about him; and with patience, ground and weather permitting, you may get an artist out of him—not otherwise. And what I have to speak to you about to-night is mainly the ground and the weather, it being the first and quite most material question in this matter, whether the ground and weather of Bradford or the ground and weather of England in general—suit wheat.

And observe in the outset, it is not so much what the present circumstances of England are, as what we wish to

\* I shall endeavour for the future to put my self-contradictions in short sentences and direct terms, in order to save sagacious persons the trouble of looking for them.

make them, that we have to consider. If you will tell me what you ultimately intend Bradford to be, perhaps I can tell you what Bradford can ultimately produce. But you must have your minds clearly made up, and be distinct in telling me what you do want. At present I don't know what you are aiming at, and possibly on consideration you may feel some doubt whether you know yourselves. As matters stand, all over England, as soon as one mill is at work, occupying two hundred hands, we try, by means of it, to set another mill at work, occupying four hundred. That is all simple and comprehensible enough—but what is it to come to? How many mills do we want? or do we indeed want no end of mills? Let us entirely understand each other on this point before we go any farther. Last week, I drove from Rochdale to Bolton Abbey; quietly, in order to see the country, and certainly it was well worth while. I never went over a more interesting twenty miles than those between Rochdale and Burnley. Naturally, the valley has been one of the most beautiful in the Lancashire hills; one of the far away solitudes, full of old shepherd ways of life. At this time there are not—I speak deliberately, and I believe quite literally—there are not, I think, more than a thousand yards of road to be traversed anywhere, without passing a furnace or mill.

Now, is that the kind of thing you want to come to everywhere? Because, if it be, and you tell me so distinctly, I think I can make several suggestions to-night, and could make more if you give me time, which would materially advance your object. The extent of our operations at present is more or less limited by the extent of coal and ironstone, but we have not yet learned to make proper use of our clay. Over the greater part of England, south of the manufacturing districts, there are magnificent beds of various kinds of useful clay; and I believe that it would not be difficult to point out modes of employing it which might enable us to turn nearly the whole of the south of England into a brick-field, as we have already turned nearly the whole of the north into a coal-pit. I say “nearly” the whole, because, as you are doubtless aware, there are considerable districts in the south composed of chalk, renowned up to the present time for their downs and mutton. But, I think, by examining carefully into the conceivable uses of chalk, we might discover a quite feasible probability of

turning all the chalk districts into a limekiln, as we turn the clay districts into a brickfield. There would then remain nothing but the mountain districts to be dealt with; but, as we have not yet ascertained all the uses of clay and chalk, still less have we ascertained those of stone; and I think, by draining the useless inlets of the Cumberland, Welsh, and Scotch lakes, and turning them, with their rivers, into navigable reservoirs and canals, there would be no difficulty in working the whole of our mountain districts as a gigantic quarry of slate and granite, from which all the rest of the world might be supplied with roofing and building stone.

Is this, then, what you want? You are going straight at it at present; and I have only to ask under what limitations I am to conceive or describe your final success? Or shall there be no limitations? There are none to your powers; every day puts new machinery at your disposal, and increases, with your capital, the vastness of your undertakings. The changes in the state of this country are now so rapid that it would be wholly absurd to endeavour to lay down laws of art education for it under its present aspect and circumstances; and therefore I must necessarily ask, how much of it do you seriously intend within the next fifty years to be coal-pit, brickfield, or quarry? For the sake of distinctness of conclusion, I will suppose your success absolute: that from shore to shore the whole of the island is to be set as thick with chimneys as the masts stand in the docks of Liverpool; that there shall be no meadows in it; no trees; no gardens; only a little corn grown upon the house tops, reaped and threshed by steam: that you do not leave even room for roads, but travel either over the roofs of your mills, on viaducts; or under their floors, in tunnels: that, the smoke having rendered the light of the sun un-serviceable, you work always by the light of your own gas: that no acre of English ground shall be without its shaft and its engine; and therefore, no spot of English ground left on which it shall be possible to stand without a definite and calculable chance of being blown off it, at any moment, into small pieces.

Under these circumstances (if this is to be the future of England), no designing or any other development of beautiful art will be possible. Do not vex your minds nor waste your money with any thought or effort in the matter. Beautiful art can only be produced by people who have

beautiful things about them, and leisure to look at them; and unless you provide some elements of beauty for your workmen to be surrounded by, you will find that no elements of beauty can be invented by them.

I was struck forcibly by the bearing of this great fact upon our modern efforts at ornamentation in an afternoon walk, last week, in the suburbs of one of our large manufacturing towns. I was thinking of the difference, in the effect upon the designer's mind, between the scene which I then came upon and the scene which would have presented itself to the eyes of any designer of the Middle Ages, when he left his workshop. Just outside the town I came upon an old English cottage or mansion, I hardly know which to call it, set close under the hill, and beside the river, perhaps built somewhere in the Charles's times, with mullioned windows and a low arched porch; round which, in the little triangular garden, one can imagine the family as they used to sit in old summer times, the ripple of the river heard faintly through the sweetbriar hedge, and the sheep on the far-off wolds shining in the evening sunlight. There, uninhabited for many and many a year, it had been left in unregarded havoc of ruin; the garden gate still swung loose to its latch; the garden, blighted utterly into a field of ashes, not even a weed taking root there; the roof torn into shapeless rents; the shutters hanging about the windows in rags of rotten wood; before its gate, the stream which had gladdened it now soaking slowly by, black as ebony, and thick with curdling scum: the bank above it trodden into unctuous sooty slime: far in front of it, between it and the old hills, the furnaces of the city foaming forth perpetual plague of sulphurous darkness; the volumes of their storm clouds coiling low over a waste of grassless fields, fenced from each other, not by hedges, but by slabs of square stone, like gravestones, riveted together with iron.

That was your scene for the designer's contemplation in his afternoon walk at Rochdale. Now fancy what was the scene which presented itself, in his afternoon walk, to a designer of the Gothic school of Pisa—Nino Pisano, or any of his men.

On each side of a bright river he saw rise a line of brighter palaces, arched and pillared, and inlaid with deep red porphyry, and with serpentine; along the quays before their gates were riding troops of knights, noble in face and form,

dazzling in crest and shield; horse and man one labyrinth of quaint colour and gleaming light—the purple, and silver, and scarlet fringes flowing over the strong limbs and clashing mail, like sea-waves over rocks at sunset. Opening on each side from the river were gardens, courts, and cloisters; long successions of white pillars among wreaths of vine; leaping of fountains through buds of pomegranate and orange; and still along the garden paths, and under and through the crimson of the pomegranate shadows, moving slowly, groups of the fairest women that Italy ever saw—fairest, because purest and thoughtfullest; trained in all high knowledge, as in all courteous art—in dance, in song, in sweet wit, in lofty learning, in loftier courage, in loftiest love—able alike to cheer, to enchant, or save the souls of men. Above all this scenery of perfect human life rose dome and bell-tower, burning with white alabaster and gold: beyond dome and bell-tower the slopes of mighty hills, hoary with olive; far in the north, above a purple sea of peaks of solemn Apennine, the clear, sharp-cloven Carrara Mountains sent up their steadfast flames of marble summit into amber sky; the great sea itself, scorching with expanse of light, stretching from their feet to the Gorgonian isles; and over all these, ever present, near or far—seen through the leaves of vine, or imaged with all its march of clouds in the Arno's stream, or set with its depth of blue close against the golden hair and burning cheek of lady and knight, that untroubled and sacred sky, which was to all men, in those days of innocent faith, indeed the unquestioned abode of spirits, as the earth was of men; and which opened straight through its gates of cloud and veils of dew into the awfulness of the eternal world; a heaven which every cloud that passed was literally the chariot of an angel, and every ray of its Evening and Morning streamed from the throne of God.

What think you of that for a school of design?

I do not bring this contrast before you as a ground of hopelessness in our task; neither do I look for any possible renovation of the Republic of Pisa, at Bradford, in the nineteenth century; but I put it before you in order that you may be aware precisely of the kind of difficulty you have to meet, and may then consider with yourselves how far you can meet it. To men surrounded by the depressing and monotonous circumstances of English manufacturing life, depend upon it, design is simply impossible. This is the most

distinct of all the experiences I have had in dealing with the modern workman. He is intelligent and ingenious in the highest degree—subtle in touch and keen in sight: but he is, generally speaking, wholly destitute of designing power. And if you want to give him the power, you must give him the materials, and put him in the circumstances for it. Design is not the offspring of idle fancy: it is the studied result of accumulative observation and delightful habit. Without observation and experience, no design—without peace and pleasurable occupation, no design—and all the lecturings and teachings and prizes, and principles of art, in the world, are of no use so long as you don't surround your men with happy influences and beautiful things. It is impossible for them to have right ideas about colour, unless they see the lovely colours of nature unspoiled; impossible for them to supply beautiful incident and action in their ornament, unless they see beautiful incident and action in the world about them. Inform their minds, refine their habits, and you form and refine their designs: but keep them illiterate, uncomfortable, and in the midst of unbeautiful things, and whatever they do will still be spurious, vulgar, and valueless.

I repeat, that I do not ask you nor wish you to build a new Pisa for them. We don't want either the life or the decorations of the thirteenth century back again; and the circumstances with which you must surround your workmen are those simply of happy modern English life, because the designs you have now to ask for from your workmen are such as will make modern English life beautiful. All that gorgeousness of the Middle Ages, beautiful as it sounds in description, noble as in many respects it was in reality, had nevertheless, for foundation and for end, nothing but the pride of life—the pride of the so-called superior classes; a pride which supported itself by violence and robbery, and led in the end to the destruction both of the arts themselves and the States in which they flourished.

The great lesson of history is, that all the fine arts hitherto—having been supported by the selfish power of the noblesse, and never having extended their range to the comfort or the relief of the mass of the people—the arts, I say, thus practised, and thus matured, have only accelerated the ruin of the State they adorned; and at the moment when in any kingdom, you point to the triumphs of its



greatest artists, you point also to the determined hour of the kingdom's decline. The names of great painters are like passing bells: in the name of Velasquez you hear sounded the fall of Spain; in the name of Titian, that of Venice; in the name of Leonardo, that of Milan; in the name of Raphael, that of Rome. And there is profound justice in this; for in proportion to the nobleness of the power is the guilt of its use for purposes vain or vile; and hitherto the greater the art, the more surely has it been used, and used solely, for the decoration of pride,\* or the provoking of sensuality. Another course lies open to us. We may abandon the hope—or if you like the words better—we may disdain the temptation, of the pomp and grace of Italy in her youth. For us there can be no more the throne of marble—for us no more the vault of gold—but for us there is the loftier and lovelier privilege of bringing the power and charm of art within the reach of the humble and the poor; and as the magnificence of past ages failed by its narrowness and its pride, ours may prevail and continue, by its universality and its lowliness.

And thus, between the picture of too laborious England, which we imagined as future, and the picture of too luxurious Italy, which we remember in the past, there may exist—there will exist, if we do our duty—an intermediate condition neither oppressed by labour nor wasted in vanity—the condition of a peaceful and thoughtful temperance in aims, and acts, and arts.

We are about to enter upon a period of our world's history in which domestic life, aided by the arts of peace, will slowly, but at last entirely, supersede public life and the arts of war. For our own England, she will not, I believe, be blasted throughout with furnaces; nor will she be encumbered with palaces. I trust she will keep her green fields, her cottages, and her homes of middle life; but these ought to be, and I trust will be enriched with a useful, truthful, substantial form of art. We want now no more feasts of the gods, nor martyrdoms of saints; we have no need of sensuality, no place for superstition, or for costly insolence. Let us have learned and faithful historical painting—touching and thoughtful representations of human nature, in dramatic painting; poetical and familiar

\* Whether religious or profane pride—chapel—or banqueting room—is no matter.

renderings of natural objects and of landscape; and rational, deeply-felt realisations of the events which are the subjects of our religious faith. And let these things we want, as far as possible, be scattered abroad and made accessible to all men.

So also, in manufacture: we require work substantial rather than rich in make; and refined, rather than splendid in design. Your stuffs need not be such as would catch the eye of a duchess; but they should be such as may at once serve the need, and refine the taste, of a cottager. The prevailing error in English dress, especially among the lower orders, is a tendency to flimsiness and gaudiness, arising mainly from the awkward imitation of their superiors.\* It should be one of the first objects of all manufacturers to produce stuffs not only beautiful and quaint in design, but also adapted for every-day service, and decorous in humble and secluded life. And you must remember always that your business, as manufacturers, is to form the market, as much as to supply it. If, in shortsighted and reckless eagerness for wealth, you catch at every humour of the populace as it shapes itself into momentary demand—if, in jealous rivalry with neighbouring States, or with other producers, you try to attract attention by singularities, novelties, and gaudinesses—to make every design an advertisement, and pilfer every idea of a successful neighbour's, that you may insidiously imitate it, or pompously eclipse—no good design will ever be possible to you, or perceived by you. You may, by accident, snatch the market or, by energy, command it; you may obtain the confidence of the public, and cause the ruin of opponent houses; or you may,

\* If their superiors would give them simplicity and economy to imitate, it would, in the issue, be well for themselves, as well as for those whom they guide. The typhoid fever of passion for dress, and all other display which has struck the upper classes of Europe at this time, is one of the most dangerous political elements we have to deal with. Its wickedness I have shown elsewhere (*Political Economy of Art*, p. 62 *et seq.*); but its wickedness is, in the minds of most persons, a matter of no importance. I wish I had time also to show them its danger. I cannot enter here into political investigation; but this is a certain fact, that the wasteful and vain expenses at present indulged in by the upper classes are hastening the advance of republicanism more than any other element of modern change. No agitators, no clubs, no epidemical errors, ever were, or will be, fatal to social order in any nation. Nothing but the guilt of the upper classes, wanton, accumulated, reckless, and merciless, ever overthrows them. Of such guilt they have now much to answer for—let them look to it in time.

with equal justice of fortune, be ruined by them. But whatever happens to you, this, at least, is certain, that the whole of your life will have been spent in corrupting public taste and encouraging public extravagance. Every preference you have won by gaudiness must have been based on the purchaser's vanity; every demand you have created by novelty has fostered in the consumer a habit of discontent; and when you retire into inactive life, you may, as a subject of consolation for your declining years, reflect that precisely according to the extent of your past operations, your life has been successful in retarding the arts, tarnishing the virtues, and confusing the manners of your country.

But, on the other hand, if you resolve from the first that, so far as you can ascertain or discern what is best, you will produce what is best, on an intelligent consideration of the probable tendencies and possible tastes of the people whom you supply, you may literally become more influential for all kinds of good than many lecturers on art, or many treatise-writers on morality. Considering the materials dealt with, and the crude state of art knowledge at the time, I do not know that any more wide or effective influence in public taste was ever exercised than that of the Staffordshire manufacture of pottery under William Wedgwood; and it only rests with the manufacturer in every other business to determine whether he will, in like manner, make his wares educational instruments, or mere drugs of the market. You all should be, in a certain sense, authors; you must, indeed, first catch the public eye, as an author must the public ear; but once gain your audience, or observance, and as it is in the writer's power thenceforward to publish what will educate as it amuses—so it is in yours to publish what will educate as it adorns. Nor is this surely a subject of poor ambition. I hear it said continually that men are too ambitious: alas! to me, it seems they are never enough ambitious. How many are content to be merely the thriving merchants of a state, when they might be its guides, counsellors, and rulers—wielding powers of subtle but gigantic beneficence, in restraining its follies while they supplied its wants. Let such duty, such ambition, be once accepted in their fulness, and the best glory of European art and of European manufacture may yet be to come. The paintings of Raphael and of Buonaroti gave force to the falsehoods of superstition, and majesty to the imaginations

of sin; but the arts of England may have, for their task, to inform the soul with truth, and touch the heart with compassion. The steel of Toledo and the silk of Genoa did but give strength to oppression and lustre to pride: let it be for the furnace and for the loom of England, as they have already richly earned, still more abundantly to bestow, comfort on the indigent, civilisation on the rude, and to dispense, through the peaceful homes of nations, the grace and the preciousness of simple adornment, and useful possession.





## LECTURE IV

### INFLUENCE OF IMAGINATION IN ARCHITECTURE

IF we were to be asked abruptly, and required to answer briefly, what qualities chiefly distinguish great artists from feeble artists, we should answer, I suppose, first, their sensibility and tenderness; secondly, their imagination; and thirdly, their industry. Some of us might, perhaps, doubt the justice of attaching so much importance to this last character, because we have all known clever men who were indolent, and dull men who were industrious. But though you may have known clever men who were indolent, you never knew a *great* man who was so; and, during such investigation as I have been able to give to the lives of the artists whose works are in all points noblest, no fact ever looms so large upon me—no law remains so steadfast in the universality of its application, as the fact and law that they are all great workers; nothing concerning them is matter of more astonishment than the quantity they have accomplished in the given length of their life; and when I hear a young man spoken of, as giving promise of high genius, the first question I ask about him is always—

Does he work?

But though this quality of industry is essential to an artist, it does not in any wise make an artist; many people are busy, whose doings are little worth. Neither does sensibility make an artist; since, as I hope, many can feel both strongly and nobly, who yet care nothing about art. But the gifts which distinctively mark the artist—*without* which he must be feeble in life, forgotten in death—*with* which he may become one of the shakers of the earth, and one of the signal lights in heaven—are those of sympathy and imagination. I will not occupy your time, nor incur the risk of your dissent, by endeavouring to give any close definition of this last word. We all have a general and sufficient idea of imagination, and of its work with our hands and in our

hearts: we understand it, I suppose, as the imaging or picturing of new things in our thoughts; and we always show an involuntary respect for this power, wherever we can recognise it, acknowledging it to be a greater power than manipulation, or calculation, or observation, or any other human faculty. If we see an old woman spinning at the fireside, and distributing her thread dexterously from the distaff, we respect her for her manipulation—if we ask her how much she expects to make in a year, and she answers quickly, we respect her for her calculation—if she is watching at the same time that none of her grandchildren fall into the fire, we respect her for her observation—yet for all this she may still be a commonplace old woman enough. But if she is all the time telling her grandchildren a fairy tale out of her head, we praise her for her imagination, and say, she must be a rather remarkable old woman.

Precisely in like manner, if an architect does his working-drawing well, we praise him for his manipulation—if he keeps closely within his contract, we praise him for his honest arithmetic—if he looks well to the laying of his beams, so that nobody shall drop through the floor, we praise him for his observation. But he must, somehow, tell us a fairy tale out of his head beside all this, else we cannot praise him for his imagination, nor speak of him as we did of the old woman, as being in any wise out of the common way, a rather remarkable architect. It seemed to me, therefore, as if it might interest you to-night, if we were to consider together what fairy tales are, in and by architecture, to be told—what there is for you to do in this severe art of yours “out of your heads,” as well as by your hands.

Perhaps the first idea which a young architect is apt to be allured by, as a head-problem in these experimental days, is its being incumbent upon him to invent a “new style” worthy of modern civilisation in general, and of England in particular; a style worthy of our engines and telegraphs; as expansive as steam, and as sparkling as electricity. But, if there are any of my hearers who have been impressed with this sense of inventive duty, may I ask them, first, whether their plan is that every inventive architect among us shall invent a new style for himself, and have a county set aside for his conceptions, or a province for his practice? Or, must every architect invent a little piece of the new style, and all put it together at last like a dis-



sected map? And if so, when the new style is invented, what is to be done next? I will grant you this Eldorado of imagination—but can you have more than one Columbus? Or, if you sail in company, and divide the prize of your discovery and the honour thereof, who is to come after you, clustered Columbuses? to what fortunate islands of style are your architectural descendants to sail, avaricious of new lands? When our desired style is invented, will not the best we can all do be simply—to build in it?—and cannot you now do that in styles that are known? Observe, I grant, for the sake of your argument, what perhaps many of you know that I would not grant otherwise—that a new style *can* be invented. I grant you not only this, but that it shall be wholly different from any that was ever practised before. We will suppose that capitals are to be at the bottom of pillars instead of the top; and that buttresses shall be on the tops of pinnacles instead of at the bottom; that you roof your apertures with stones which shall neither be arched nor horizontal; and that you compose your decoration of lines which shall neither be crooked nor straight. The furnace and the forge shall be at your service: you shall draw out your plates of glass and beat out your bars of iron till you have encompassed us all—if your style is of the practical kind—with endless perspective of black skeleton and blinding square—or if your style is to be of the ideal kind—you shall wreath your streets with ductile leafage, and roof them with variegated crystal—you shall put, if you will, all London under one blazing dome of many colours that shall light the clouds round it with its flashing, as far as to the sea. And still, I ask you, What after this? Do you suppose those imaginations of yours will ever lie down there asleep beneath the shade of your iron leafage, or within the coloured light of your enchanted dome? Not so. Those souls and fancies, and ambitions of yours, are wholly infinite; and, whatever may be done by others, you will still want to do something for yourselves; if you cannot rest content with Palladio, neither will you with Paxton: all the metal and glass that ever were melted have not so much weight in them as will clog the wings of one human spirit's aspiration.

If you will think over this quietly by yourselves, and can get the noise out of your ears of the perpetual, empty, idle, incomparably idiotic talk about the necessity of some

novelty in architecture, you will soon see that the very essence of a Style, properly so called, is that it should be practised *for ages*, and applied to all purposes; and that so long as any given style is in practice, all that is left for individual imagination to accomplish must be within the scope of that style, not in the invention of a new one. If there are any here, therefore, who hope to obtain celebrity by the invention of some strange way of building which must convince all Europe into its adoption, to them, for the moment, I must not be understood to address myself, but only to those who would be content with that degree of celebrity which an artist may enjoy who works in the manner of his forefathers—which the builder of Salisbury Cathedral might enjoy in England, though he did not invent Gothic; and which Titian might enjoy at Venice, though he did not invent oil painting. Addressing myself then to those humbler, but wiser, or rather, only wise students who are content to avail themselves of some system of building already understood, let us consider together what room for the exercise of the imagination may be left to us under such conditions. And, first, I suppose it will be said, or thought, that the architect's principal field for exercise of his invention must be in the disposition of lines, mouldings, and masses, in agreeable proportions. Indeed, if you adopt some styles of architecture, you cannot exercise invention in any other way. And I admit that it requires genius and special gift to do this rightly. Not by rule, nor by study, can the gift of graceful proportionate design be obtained; only by the intuition of genius can so much as a single tier of façade be beautifully arranged; and the man has just cause for pride, as far as our gifts can ever be a cause for pride, who finds himself able, in a design of his own, to rival even the simplest arrangement of parts in one by Sanmicheli, Inigo Jones, or Christopher Wren.

Invention, then, and genius being granted, as necessary to accomplish this, let me ask you, What, after all, with this special gift and genius, you *have* accomplished, when you have arranged the lines of a building beautifully?

In the first place you will not, I think, tell me that the beauty there attained is of a touching or pathetic kind. A well-disposed group of notes in music will make you sometimes weep and sometimes laugh. You can express the depth of all affections by those dispositions of sound; you

can give courage to the soldier, language to the lover, consolation to the mourner, more joy to the joyful, more humility to the devout. Can you do as much by your group of lines? Do you suppose the front of Whitehall, a singularly beautiful one, ever inspires the two Horse Guards, during the hour they sit opposite to it, with military ardour? Do you think that the lovers in our London walk down to the front of Whitehall for consolation when mistresses are unkind; or that any person wavering in duty, or feeble in faith, was ever confirmed in purpose or in creed by the pathetic appeal of those harmonious architraves? You will not say so. Then, if they cannot touch, or inspire, or comfort any one, can your architectural proportions amuse any one? Christmas is just over; you have doubtless been at many merry parties during the period. Can you remember any in which architectural proportions contributed to the entertainment of the evening? Proportions of notes in music were, I am sure, essential to your amusement; the setting of flowers in hair, and the ribands on dresses, were also subjects of frequent admiration with you, not inessential to your happiness. Among the juvenile members of your society the proportion of currants in cake, and of sugar in comfits, became subjects of acute interest; and, when such proportions were harmonious, motives also of gratitude to cook and to confectioner. But, did you ever see either young or old amused by the architrave of the door? Or otherwise interested in the proportions of the room than as they admitted more or fewer friendly faces? Nay, if all the amusement that there is in the best proportioned architecture of London could be concentrated into one evening, and you were to issue tickets for nothing to this great proportional entertainment;—how do you think it would stand between you and the Drury pantomime?

You are, then, remember, granted to be people of genius—great and admirable; and you devote your lives to your art, but you admit that you cannot comfort anybody, you cannot encourage anybody, you cannot improve anybody, and you cannot amuse anybody? I proceed then farther to ask, Can you inform anybody? Many sciences cannot be considered as highly touching or emotional; nay, perhaps not specially amusing; scientific men may sometimes, in these respects, stand on the same ground with you. As far as we can judge by the results of the late war, science

helps our soldiers about as much as the front of Whitehall; and at the Christmas parties, the children wanted no geologists to tell them about the behaviour of bears and dragons in Queen Elizabeth's time. Still, your man of science teaches you something; he may be dull at a party, or helpless in a battle, he is not always that; but he can give you, at all events, knowledge of noble facts, and open to you the secrets of the earth and air. Will your architectural proportions do as much? Your genius is granted, and your life is given, and what do you teach us?—Nothing, I believe, from one end of that life to the other, but that two and two make four, and that one is to two as three is to six.

You cannot, then, it is admitted, comfort anyone, serve or amuse anyone, nor teach anyone. Finally, I ask, Can you be of *Use* to anyone? "Yes," you reply; "certainly we are of some use—we architects—in a climate like this, where it always rains." You are of use, certainly; but, pardon me, only as builders—not as proportionalists. We are not talking of building as a protection, but only of that special work which your genius is to do; not of building substantial and comfortable houses like Mr. Cubitt, but of putting beautiful façades on them like Inigo Jones. And, again, I ask—Are you of use to anyone? Will your proportions of façade heal the sick, or clothe the naked? Supposing you devoted your lives to be merchants, you might reflect at the close of them, how many, fainting for want, you had brought corn to sustain; how many, infected with disease, you had brought balms to heal; how widely, among multitudes of far-away nations, you had scattered the first seeds of national power, and guided the first rays of sacred light. Had you been, in fine, *anything* else in the world *but* architectural designers, you might have been of some use or good to people. Content to be petty tradesmen, you would have saved the time of mankind—rough-handed daily labourers, you would have added to their stock of food or of clothing. But, being men of genius, and devoting your lives to the exquisite exposition of this genius, on what achievements do you think the memories of your old age are to fasten? Whose gratitude will surround you with its glow, or on what accomplished good, of that greatest kind for which men show *no* gratitude, will your life rest the contentment of its close? Truly, I fear that the ghosts of proportionate lines will be thin phantoms at your

bedsides—very speechless to you; and that on all the emanations of your high genius you will look back with less delight than you might have done on a cup of cold water given to him who was thirsty, or to a single moment when you had “prevented with your bread him that fled.”

Do not answer, nor think to answer, that with your great works and great payments of workmen in them, you would do this; I know you would, and will, as Builders; but, I repeat, it is not your *building* that I am talking about, but your *brains*; it is your invention and imagination of whose profit I am speaking. The good done through the building, observe, is done by your employers, not by you—you share in the benefit of it. The good that *you* personally must do is by your designing; and I compare you with musicians who do good by their pathetic composing, not as they do good by employing fiddlers in the orchestra; for it is the public who in reality do that, not the musicians. So clearly keeping to this one question, what good we architects are to do by our genius; and having found that on our proportionate system we can do no good to others, will you tell me, lastly, what good we can do *ourselves*?

Observe, nearly every other liberal art or profession has some intense pleasure connected with it, irrespective of any good to others. As lawyers, or physicians, or clergymen, you would have the pleasure of investigation, and of historical reading, as part of your work: as men of science you would be rejoicing in curiosity perpetually gratified respecting the laws and facts of nature: as artists you would have delight in watching the external forms of nature: as day labourers or petty tradesmen, supposing you to undertake such work with as much intellect as you are going to devote to your designing, you would find continued subjects of interest in the manufacture or the agriculture which you helped to improve; or in the problems of commerce which bore on your business. But your architectural designing leads you into no pleasant journeys—into no seeing of lovely things—no discerning of just laws—no warmths of compassion, no humilities of veneration, no progressive state of sight of soul. Our conclusion is—must be—that you will not amuse, nor inform, nor help anybody; you will not amuse, nor better, nor inform yourselves; you will sink into a state in which you can neither show, nor feel, nor see anything, but that one is to two as three is to six. And in

that state what should we call ourselves? Men? I think not. The right name for us would be—numerators and denominators. Vulgar Fractions.

Shall we, then, abandon this theory of the soul of architecture being in proportional lines, and look whether we can find anything better to exert our fancies upon?

May we not, to begin with, accept this great principle—that, as our bodies, to be in health, must be *generally* exercised, so our minds, to be in health, must be *generally* cultivated? You would not call a man healthy who had strong arms but was paralytic in his feet; nor who could walk well, but had no use of his hands; nor one who could see well, if he could not hear. You would not voluntarily reduce your bodies to any such partially developed state. Much more, then, you would not, if you could help it, reduce your minds to it. Now, your minds are endowed with a vast number of gifts of totally different uses—limbs of mind, as it were, which, if you don't exercise, you cripple. One is curiosity; that is a gift, a capacity of pleasure in knowing; which if you destroy, you make yourselves cold and dull. Another is sympathy; the power of sharing in the feelings of living creatures, which if you destroy, you make yourselves hard and cruel. Another of your limbs of mind is admiration; the power of enjoying beauty or ingenuity, which if you destroy, you make yourselves base and irreverent. Another is wit; or the power of playing with the lights on the many sides of truth; which if you destroy, you make yourselves gloomy, and less useful and cheering to others than you might be. So that in choosing your way of work it should be your aim, as far as possible, to bring out all these faculties as far as they exist in you; not one merely, nor another, but all of them. And the way to bring them out, is simply to concern yourselves attentively with the subjects of each faculty. To cultivate sympathy you must be among living creatures, and thinking about them; and to cultivate admiration, you must be among beautiful things and looking at them.

All this sounds much like truism, at least I hope it does, for then you will surely not refuse to act upon it; and to consider farther, how, as architects, you are to keep yourselves in contemplation of living creatures and lovely things.

You all probably know the beautiful photographs which have been published within the last year or two of the

porches of the Cathedral of Amiens. I hold one of these up to you (merely that you may know what I am talking about, as of course you cannot see the detail at this distance, but you will recognise the subject). Have you ever considered how much sympathy, and how much humour, are developed in filling this single doorway \* with these sculptures of the history of St. Honoré (and, by the way, considering how often we English are now driving up and down the Rue St. Honoré, we may as well know as much of the saint as the old architect cared to tell us). You know, in all legends of saints who ever were bishops, the first things you are told of them is that they didn't want to be bishops. So here is St. Honoré, who doesn't want to be a bishop, sitting sulkily in the corner; he hugs his book with both hands, and won't get up to take his crosier; and here are all the city aldermen of Amiens come to *poke* him up; and all the monks in the town in a great puzzle what they shall do for a bishop if St. Honoré won't be; and here's one of the monks in the opposite corner who is quite cool about it, and thinks they'll get on well enough without St. Honoré—you see that in his face perfectly. At last St. Honoré consents to be bishop, and here he sits in a throne, and has his book now grandly on a desk instead of his knees, and he directs one of his village curates how to find relics in a wood; here is the wood, and here is the village curate, and here are the tombs, with the bones of St. Victorien and Gentien in them.

After this, St. Honoré performs grand mass, and the miracle occurs of the appearance of a hand blessing the wafer, which occurrence afterwards was painted for the arms of the abbey. Then St. Honoré dies; and here is his tomb with this statue on the top; and miracles are being performed at it—a deaf man having his ear touched, and a blind man groping his way up to the tomb with his dog. Then here is a great procession in honour of the relics of St. Honoré; and under his coffin are some cripples being healed; and the coffin itself is put above the bar which separates the cross from the lower subjects, because the tradition is that the figure on the crucifix of the Church of St. Firmin bowed its head in token of acceptance as the relics of St. Honoré passed beneath.

Now just consider the amount of sympathy with human

\* The tympanum of the south transept door; it is to be found generally among all collections of architectural photographs.

nature, and observance of it, shown in this one bas-relief; the sympathy with disputing monks, with puzzled aldermen, with melancholy recluse, with triumphant prelate, with palsy-stricken poverty, with ecclesiastical magnificence, or miracle-working faith. Consider how much intellect was needed in the architect, and how much observance of nature, before he could give the expression to these various figures—cast these multitudinous draperies—design these rich and quaint fragments of tombs and altars—weave with perfect animation the entangled branches of the forest.

But you will answer me, all this is not architecture at all—it is sculpture. Will you then tell me precisely where the separation exists between one and the other? We will begin at the very beginning. I will show you a piece of what you will certainly admit to be a piece of pure architecture; \* It is drawn on the back of another photograph, another of these marvellous tympana from Notre Dame, which you call, I suppose, impure. Well, look on this picture, and on this. Don't laugh; you must not laugh, that's very improper of you, this is classical architecture. I have taken it out of the essay on that subject in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Yet I suppose none of you would think yourselves particularly ingenious architects if you had designed nothing more than this; nay, I will even let you improve it into any grand proportion you choose, and add to it as many windows as you choose; the only thing I insist upon in our specimen of pure architecture is, that there shall be no mouldings nor ornaments upon it. And I suspect you don't quite like your architecture so "pure" as this. We want a few mouldings, you will say—just a few. Those who want mouldings, hold up their hands. We are unanimous, I think. Will you, then, design the profiles of these mouldings yourself, or will you copy them? If you wish to copy them, and to copy them always, of course I leave you at once to your authorities, and your imaginations to their repose. But if you wish to design them yourselves, how do you do it? You draw the profile according to your taste, and you order your mason to cut it. Now, will you tell me the logical difference between drawing the profile of a moulding and giving *that* to be cut, and drawing the folds of the drapery of a statue and giving *those* to be cut. The last is

\* See Appendix III. p. 140 : Classical Architecture.



much more difficult to do than the first; but degrees of difficulty constitute no specific difference, and you will not accept it, surely, as a definition of the difference between architecture and sculpture, that "architecture is doing anything that is easy, and sculpture anything that is difficult."

It is true, also, that the carved moulding represents nothing, and the carved drapery represents something; but you will not, I should think, accept, as an explanation of the difference between architecture and sculpture, this any more than the other, that "sculpture is art which has meaning, and architecture art which has none."

Where, then, is your difference? In this, perhaps you will say; that whatever ornaments we can direct ourselves, and get accurately cut to order, we consider architectural. The ornaments that we are obliged to leave to the pleasure of the workman, or the superintendence of some other designer we consider sculptural, especially if they are more or less extraneous and incrustated—not an essential part of the building.

Accepting this definition, I am compelled to reply, that it is in effect nothing more than an amplification of my first one—that whatever is easy you call architecture, whatever is difficult you call sculpture. For you cannot suppose the arrangement of the place in which the sculpture is to be put is so difficult or so great a part of the design as the sculpture itself. For instance: you all know the pulpit of Niccolo Pisano, in the baptistery at Pisa. It is composed of seven rich *relievi*, surrounded by panel mouldings, and sustained on marble shafts. Do you suppose Niccolo Pisano's reputation—such part of it at least as rests on this pulpit (and much does)—depends on the panel mouldings, or on the *relievi*? The panel mouldings are by his hand; he would have disdained to leave even them to a common workman; but do you think he found any difficulty in them, or thought there was any credit in them? Having once done the sculpture, those enclosing lines were mere child's play to him; the determination of the diameter of shafts and height of capitals was an affair of minutes; his *work* was in carving the Crucifixion and the Baptism.

Or, again, do you recollect Orcagna's tabernacle in the church of San Michele, at Florence? That, also, consists of rich and multitudinous bas-reliefs, enclosed in panel mouldings, with shafts of mosaic, and foliated arches sus-

taining the canopy. Do you think Orcagna, any more than Pisano, if his spirit could rise in the midst of us at this moment, would tell us that he had trusted his fame to the foliation, or had put his soul's pride into the panelling? Not so; he would tell you that his spirit was in the stooping figures that stand round the couch of the dying Virgin.

Or, lastly, do you think the man who designed the procession on the portal of Amiens was the subordinate workman? that there was an architect over *him*, restraining him with certain limits, and ordering of him his bishops at so much a mitre, and his cripples at so much a crutch? Not so. *Here*, on this sculptured shield, rests the Master's hand; *this* is the centre of the Master's thought: from this, and in subordination to this, waved the arch and sprang the pinnacle. Having done this, and being able to give human expression and action to the stone, all the rest—the rib, the niche, the foil, the shaft—were mere toys to his hand and accessories to his conception; and if once you also gain the gift of doing this, if once you can carve one fronton such as you have here, I tell you, you would be able—so far as it depended on your invention—to scatter cathedrals over England as fast as clouds rise from its streams after summer rain.

Nay, but perhaps you answer again, our sculptors at present do not design cathedrals, and could not. No, they could not; but that is merely because we have made architecture so dull that they cannot take any interest in it, and, therefore, do not care to add to their higher knowledge the poor and common knowledge of principles of building. You have thus separated building from sculpture, and you have taken away the power of both; for the sculptor loses nearly as much by never having room for the development of a continuous work, as you do from having reduced your work to a continuity of mechanism. You are essentially, and should always be, the same body of men, admitting only such difference in operation as there is between the work of a painter at different times, who sometimes labours on a small picture, and sometimes on the frescoes of a palace gallery.

This conclusion, then, we arrive at, *must* arrive at; the fact being irrevocably so:—that in order to give your imagination and the other powers of your souls full play,

you must do as all the great architects of old time did—you must yourselves be your sculptors. Phidias, Michael Angelo, Orcagna, Pisano, Giotto—which of these men, do you think, could not use his chisel? You say: “It is difficult; quite out of the way.” I know it is; nothing that is great is easy; and nothing that is great, so long as you study building without sculpture, can be *in* your way. I want to put it in your way, and you to find your way to it. But, on the other hand, do not shrink from the task as if the refined art of perfect sculpture were always required from you. For, though architecture and sculpture are not separate arts, there is an architectural *manner* of sculpture; and it is, in the majority of its applications, a comparatively easy one. Our great mistake at present, in dealing with stone at all, is requiring to have all our work too refined; it is just the same mistake as if we were to require all our book illustrations to be as fine work as Raphael’s. John Leech does not sketch so well as Leonardo da Vinci; but do you think that the public could easily spare him; or that he is wrong in bringing out his talent in the way in which it is most effective? Would you advise him, if he asked your advice, to give up his wood-blocks and take to canvas? I know you would not; neither would you tell him, I believe, on the other hand, that, because he could not draw as well as Leonardo, therefore he ought to draw nothing but straight lines with a ruler, and circles with compasses, and no figure-subjects at all. That would be some loss to you; would it not? You would all be vexed if next week’s *Punch* had nothing in it but proportionate lines. And yet, do not you see that you are doing precisely the same thing with *your* powers of sculptural design that he would be doing with his powers of pictorial design, if he gave you nothing but such lines. You feel that you cannot carve like Phidias; therefore you will not carve at all, but only draw mouldings; and thus all that intermediate power which is of especial value in modern days—that popular power of expression which is within the attainment of thousands, and would address itself to tens of thousands—is utterly lost to us in stone, though in ink and paper it has become one of the most important engines, and one of the most desired luxuries, of modern civilisation.

Here, then, is one part of the subject to which I would especially invite your attention, namely, the distinctive

character which may be wisely permitted to belong to architectural sculpture, as distinguished from perfect sculpture on one side, and from mere geometrical decoration on the other.

And first, observe what an indulgence we have in the distance at which most work is to be seen. Supposing we were able to carve eyes and lips with the most exquisite precision, it would all be of no use as soon as the work was put far above the eye; but, on the other hand, as beauties disappear by being far withdrawn, so will faults; and the mystery and confusion which are the natural consequence of distance, while they would often render your best skill but vain, will as often render your worst errors of little consequence; nay, more than this, often a deep cut, or a rude angle, will produce in certain positions an effect of expression both startling and true, which you never hoped for. Not that mere distance will give animation to the work, if it has none in itself; but if it has life at all, the distance will make that life more perceptible and powerful by softening the defects of execution. So that you are placed, as workmen, in this position of singular advantage, that you may give your fancies free play, and strike hard for the expression that you want, knowing that, if you miss it, no one will detect you; if you at all touch it, nature herself will help you, and with every changing shadow and basking sunbeam bring forth new phases of your fancy.

But it is not merely this privilege of being imperfect which belongs to architectural sculpture. It has a true privilege of imagination, far excelling all that can be granted to the more finished work, which, for the sake of distinction, I will call—and I don't think we can have a much better term: "furniture sculpture"; sculpture, that is, which can be moved from place to place to furnish rooms.

For observe, to that sculpture the spectator is usually brought in a tranquil or prosaic state of mind; he sees it associated rather with what is sumptuous than sublime, and under circumstances which address themselves more to his comfort than his curiosity. The statue which is to be pathetic, seen between the flashes of footmen's livery round the dining-table, must have strong elements of pathos in itself; and the statue which is to be awful, in the midst of the gossip of the drawing-room, must have the elements of awe wholly in itself. But the spectator is brought to *your*

work already in an excited and imaginative mood. He has been impressed by the cathedral wall as it loomed over the low streets, before he looks up to the carving of its porch—and his love of mystery has been touched by the silence and the shadows of the cloister, before he can set himself to decipher the bosses on its vaulting. So that when once he begins to observe your doings, he will ask nothing better from you, nothing kinder from you, than that you would meet this imaginative temper of his half way—that you would farther touch the sense of terror, or satisfy the expectation of things strange, which have been prompted by the mystery or the majesty of the surrounding scene. And thus, your leaving forms more or less undefined, or carrying out your fancies, however extravagant, in grotesqueness of shadow or shape, will be for the most part in accordance with the temper of the observer; and he is likely, therefore, much more willingly to use his fancy to help your meanings, than his judgment to detect your faults.

Again. Remember that when the imagination and feelings are strongly excited, they will not only bear with strange things, but they will *look* into *minute* things with a delight quite unknown in hours of tranquillity. You surely must remember moments of your lives in which, under some strong excitement of feeling, all the details of visible objects presented themselves with a strange intensity and insistence, whether you would or no; urging themselves upon the mind, and thrust upon the eye, with a force of fascination which you could not refuse. Now, to a certain extent, the senses get into this state whenever the imagination is strongly excited. Things trivial at other times assume a dignity or significance which we cannot explain; but which is only the more attractive because inexplicable: and the powers of attention, quickened by the feverish excitement, fasten and feed upon the minutest circumstances of detail, and remotest traces of intention. So that what would at other times be felt as more or less mean or extraneous in a work of sculpture, and which would assuredly be offensive to the perfect taste in its moments of languor, or of critical judgment, will be grateful, and even sublime, when it meets this frightened inquisitiveness, this fascinated watchfulness, of the roused imagination. And this is all for your advantage; for, in the beginnings of your sculpture, you will assuredly

find it easier to imitate minute circumstances of costume or character, than to perfect the anatomy of simple forms or the flow of noble masses; and it will be encouraging to remember that the grace you cannot perfect, and the simplicity you cannot achieve, would be in great part vain, even if you could achieve them, in their appeal to the hasty curiosity of passionate fancy; but that the sympathy which would be refused to your science will be granted to your innocence; and that the mind of the general observer, though wholly unaffected by correctness of anatomy or propriety of gesture, will follow you with fond and pleased concurrence as you carve the knots of the hair, and the patterns of the vesture.

Farther yet. We are to remember that not only do the associated features of the larger architecture tend to excite the strength of fancy, but the architectural laws to which you are obliged to submit your decoration stimulate its *ingenuity*. Every crocket which you are to crest with sculpture—every foliation which you have to fill, presents itself to the spectator's fancy, not only as a pretty thing, but as a *problematic* thing. It contained, he perceives immediately, not only a beauty which you wished to display, but a necessity which you were forced to meet; and the problem, how to occupy such and such a space with organic form in any probable way, or how to turn such a boss or ridge into a conceivable image of life, becomes at once, to him as to you, a matter of amusement as much as of admiration. The ordinary conditions of perfection in form, gesture, or feature, are willingly dispensed with, when the ugly dwarf and ungainly goblin have only to gather themselves into angles, or crouch to carry corbels; and the want of skill which, in other kinds of work, would have been required for the finishing of the parts, will at once be forgiven here, if you have only disposed ingeniously what you have executed roughly, and atoned for the rudeness of your hands by the quickness of your wits.

Hitherto, however, we have been considering only the circumstances in architecture favourable to the development of the *powers* of imagination. A yet more important point for us seems, to me, the place which it gives to all the *objects* of imagination.

- For, I suppose, you will not wish me to spend any time in proving that imagination must be vigorous in proportion

to the quantity of material which it has to handle; and that, just as we increase the range of what we see, we increase the richness of what we can imagine. Granting this, consider what a field is opened to your fancy merely in the subject matter which architecture admits. Nearly every other art is severely limited in its subjects—the landscape painter, for instance, gets little help from the aspects of beautiful humanity; the historical painter, less, perhaps, than he ought, from the accidents of wild nature; and the pure sculptor, still less, from the minor details of common life. But is there anything within range of sight, or conception, which may not be of use to *you*, or in which your interest may not be excited with advantage to your art? From visions of angels, down to the least important gesture of a child at play, whatever may be conceived of Divine, or beheld of Human, may be dared or adopted by you; throughout the kingdom of animal life, no creature is so vast, or so minute, that you cannot deal with it, or bring it into service; the lion and the crocodile will couch about your shafts; the moth and the bee will sun themselves upon your flowers; for you, the fawn will leap; for you, the snail be slow; for you, the dove smooth her bosom; and the hawk spread her wings toward the south. All the wide world of vegetation blooms and bends for you; the leaves tremble that you may bid them be still under the marble snow; the thorn and the thistle, which the earth casts forth as evil, are to you the kindest servants; no dying petal, nor drooping tendril, is so feeble as to have no help for you; no robed pride of blossom so kingly, but it will lay aside its purple to receive at your hands the pale immortality. Is there anything in common life too mean—in common things too trivial—to be ennobled by your touch? As there is nothing in life, so there is nothing in lifelessness which has not its lesson for you, or its gift; and when you are tired of watching the strength of the plume, and the tenderness of the leaf, you may walk down to your rough river-shore, or into the thickest markets of your thoroughfares; and there is not a piece of torn cable that will not twine into a perfect moulding; there is not a fragment of castaway matting, or shattered basket-work, that will not work into a chequer or a capital. Yes: and if you gather up the very sand, and break the stone on which you tread, among its fragments of all but invisible shells you will find forms

that will take their place, and that proudly, among the starred traceries of your vaulting; and you, who can crown the mountain with its fortress, and the city with its towers, are thus able also to give beauty to ashes, and worthiness to dust.

Now, in that your art presents all this material to you, you have already much to rejoice in. But you have more to rejoice in, because all this is submitted to you, not to be dissected or analysed, but to be sympathised with, and to bring out, therefore, what may be accurately called the moral part of imagination. We saw that, if we kept ourselves among lines only, we should have cause to envy the naturalist, because he was conversant with facts; but you will have little to envy now, if you make yourselves conversant with the feelings that arise out of his facts. For instance, the naturalist, coming upon a block of marble, has to begin considering immediately how far its purple is owing to iron, or its whiteness to magnesia; he breaks his piece of marble, and at the close of his day, has nothing but a little sand in his crucible, and some data added to the theory of the elements. But *you* approach your marble to sympathise with it, and rejoice over its beauty. You cut it a little indeed; but only to bring out its veins more perfectly: and at the end of your day's work you leave your marble shaft with joy and complacency in its perfectness, as marble. When you have to watch an animal instead of a stone, you differ from the naturalist in the same way. He may, perhaps, if he be an amiable naturalist, take delight in having living creatures round him;—still, the major part of his work is, or has been, in counting feathers, separating fibres, and analysing structures. But *your* work is always with the living creature; the thing you have to get at in him is his life, and ways of going about things. It does not matter to you how many cells there are in his bones, or how many filaments in his feathers; what you want is his moral character and way of behaving himself; it is just that which your imagination, if healthy, will first seize—just that which your chisel, if vigorous, will first cut. You must get the storm spirit into your eagles, and the lordliness into your lions, and the tripping fear into your fawns; and in order to do this, you must be in continual sympathy with every fawn of them; and be hand-in-glove with all the lions, and hand-in-claw with all the hawks. And don't fancy that you will lower yourselves by sympathy with the



lower creatures; you cannot sympathise rightly with the higher, unless you do with those: but you have to sympathise with the higher, too—with queens, and kings, and martyrs, and angels. Yes, and above all, and more than all, with simple humanity in all its needs and ways, for there is not one hurried face that passes you in the street that will not be impressive, if you can only fathom it. All history is open to you, all high thoughts and dreams that the past fortunes of men can suggest; all fairy land is open to you—no vision that ever haunted forest, or gleamed over hill-side, but calls you to understand how it came into men's hearts, and may still touch them; and all Paradise is open to you—yes, and the work of Paradise; for in bringing all this, in perpetual and attractive truth, before the eyes of your fellow-men, you have to join in the employment of the angels, as well as to imagine their companies.

And observe, in this last respect, what a peculiar importance, and responsibility, are attached to your work, when you consider its permanence, and the multitudes to whom it is addressed. We frequently are led, by wise people, to consider what responsibility may sometimes attach to words, which yet, the chance is, will be heard by few, and forgotten as soon as heard. But none of *your* words will be heard by few, and none will be forgotten, for five or six hundred years, if you build well. You will talk to all who pass by; and all those little sympathies, those freaks of fancy, those jests in stone, those workings-out of problems in caprice will occupy mind after mind of utterly countless multitudes, long after you are gone. You have not, like authors, to plead for a hearing, or to fear oblivion. Do but build large enough, and carve boldly enough, and all the world will hear you; they cannot choose but look.

I do not mean to awe you by this thought; I do not mean that because you will have so many witnesses and watchers, you are never to jest, or to do anything gaily or lightly; on the contrary, I have pleaded, from the beginning, for this art of yours, especially because it has room for the whole of your character—if jest is in you, let the jest be jested; if mathematical ingenuity is yours, let your problem be put, and your solution worked out, as quaintly as you choose; above all, see that your work is easily and happily done, else it will never make anybody else happy: but while you thus give the rein to all your impulses, see that those

impulses be headed and centred by one noble impulse; and let that be Love—triple love—for the art which you practise, the creation in which you move, and the creatures to whom you minister.

I. I say, first, Love for the art which you practise. Be assured that if ever any other motive becomes a leading one in your mind, as the principal one for exertion, except your love of art, that moment it is all over with your art. I do not say you are not to desire money, nor to desire fame, nor to desire position; you cannot but desire all three; nay, you may—if you are willing that I should use the word Love in a desecrated sense—love all three; that is, passionately covet them, yet you must not covet or love them in the first place. Men of strong passions and imaginations must always care a great deal for anything they care for at all; but the whole question is one of first or second. Does your art lead you, or your gain lead you? You may like making money exceedingly; but if it come to a fair question, whether you are to make five hundred pounds less by this business, or to spoil your building, and you choose to spoil your building, there's an end of you. So you may be as thirsty for fame as a cricket is for cream; but, if it come to a fair question, whether you are to please the mob, or do the thing as you know it ought to be done; and you can't do both, and choose to please the mob—it's all over with you; there's no hope for you; nothing that you can do will ever be worth a man's glance as he passes by. The test is absolute, inevitable—Is your art first with you? Then you are artists; you may be, after you have made your money, misers and usurers; you may be, after you have got your fame, jealous, and proud, and wretched, and base: but yet, *as long as you won't spoil your work*, you are artists. On the other hand: Is your money first with you, and your fame first with you? Then, you may be very charitable with your money, and very magnificent with your money, and very graceful in the way you wear your reputation, and very courteous to those beneath you, and very acceptable to those above you; but you are *not artists*. You are mechanics, and drudges.

II. You must love the creation you work in the midst of. For, wholly in proportion to the intensity of feeling which you bring to the subject you have chosen, will be the depth and justice of our perception of its character. And this

depth of feeling is not to be gained on the instant, when you want to bring it to bear on this or that. It is the result of the general habit of striving to feel rightly; and, among thousands of various means of doing this, perhaps the one I ought specially to name to you, is the keeping yourselves clear of petty and mean cares. Whatever you do, don't be anxious, nor fill your heads with little chagrins and little desires. I have just said, that you may be great artists and yet be miserly and jealous, and troubled about many things. So you may be; but I said also that the miserliness or trouble must not be in your hearts all day. It is possible that you may get a habit of saving money; or it is possible at a time of great trial, you may yield to the temptation of speaking unjustly of a rival,—and you will shorten your powers and dim your sight even by this; but the thing that you have to dread far more than any such unconscious habit, or any such momentary fall—is the *constancy of small emotions*; the anxiety whether Mr. So-and-so will like your work; whether such and such a workman will do all that you want of him, and so on—not wrong feelings or anxieties in themselves, but impertinent, and wholly incompatible with the full exercise of your imagination.

Keep yourselves, therefore, quiet, peaceful, with your eyes open. It doesn't matter at all what Mr. So-and-so thinks of your work; but it matters a great deal what that bird is doing up there in its nest, or how that vagabond child at the street corner is managing his game of knuckle-down. And remember, you cannot turn aside from your own interests, to the birds and the children's interests, unless you have long before got into the habit of loving and watching birds and children; so that it all comes at last to the forgetting yourselves, and the living out of yourselves, in the calm of the great world, or if you will, in its agitation; but always in a calm of your own bringing. Do not think it wasted time to submit yourselves to any influence which may bring upon you any noble feeling. Rise early, always watch the sunrise, and the way the clouds break from the dawn; you will cast your statue-draperies in quite another than your common way, when the remembrance of that cloud motion is with you, and of the scarlet vesture of the morning. Live always in the spring time in the country; you do not know what leaf-form means, unless you have seen the buds burst, and the young leaves breathing low

in the sunshine, and wondering at the first shower of rain. But above all, accustom yourselves to look for, and to love, all nobleness of gesture and feature in the human form; and remember that the highest nobleness is usually among the aged, the poor, and the infirm: you will find, in the end, that it is not the strong arm of the soldier, nor the laugh of the young beauty, that are the best studies for you. Look at them, and look at them reverently; but be assured that endurance is nobler than strength, and patience than beauty; and that it is not in the high church pews, where the gay dresses are, but in the church free seats, where the widows' weeds are, that you may see the faces that will fit best between the angels' wings, in the church porch.

III. And therefore, lastly, and chiefly, you must love the creatures to whom you minister, your fellow-men; for, if you do not love them, not only will you be little interested in the passing events of life, but in all your gazing at humanity, you will be apt to be struck only by outside form, and not by expression. It is only kindness and tenderness which will ever enable you to see what beauty there is in the dark eyes that are sunk with weeping, and in the paleness of those fixed faces which the earth's adversity has compassed about, till they shine in their patience like dying watchfires through twilight. But it is not this only which makes it needful for you, if you would be great, to be also kind; there is a most important and all-essential reason in the very nature of your own art. So soon as you desire to build largely, and with addition of noble sculpture, you will find that your work must be associative. You cannot carve a whole cathedral yourself—you can carve but few and simple parts of it. Either your own work must be disgraced in the mass of the collateral inferiority, or you must raise your fellow-designers to correspondence of power. If you have genius, you will yourselves take the lead in the building you design; you will carve its porch and direct its disposition. But for all subsequent advancement of its detail, you must trust to the agency and the invention of others; and it rests with you either to repress what faculties your workmen have, into cunning subordination to your own; or to rejoice in discovering even the powers that may rival you, and leading forth mind after mind into fellowship with your fancy, and association with your fame.

I need not tell you that if you do the first—if you

endeavour to depress or disguise the talents of your subordinates—you are lost; for nothing could imply more darkly and decisively than this, that your art and your work were not beloved by you; that it was your own prosperity that you were seeking, and your own skill only that you cared to contemplate. I do not say that you must not be jealous at all; it is rarely in human nature to be wholly without jealousy; and you may be forgiven for going some day sadly home, when you find some youth, unpractised and unapproved, giving the life-stroke to his work which you, after years of training, perhaps, cannot reach: but your jealousy must not conquer—your love of your building must conquer, helped by your kindness of heart. See—I set no high or difficult standard before you. I do not say that you are to surrender your pre-eminence in *mere* unselfish generosity. But I do say that you must surrender your pre-eminence in your love of your building helped by your kindness; and that whomsoever you find better able to do what will adorn it than you—that person you are to give place to: and to console yourselves for the humiliation, first, by your joy in seeing the edifice grow more beautiful under his chisel, and secondly, by your sense of having done kindly and justly. But if you are morally strong enough to make the kindness and justice the first motive, it will be better;—best of all—if you do not consider it as kindness at all, but bare and stern justice; for, truly, such help as we can give each other in this world is a *debt* to each other; and the man who perceives a superiority or capacity in a subordinate, and neither confesses, nor assists it, is not merely the withholder of kindness, but the committer of injury. But be the motive what you will, only see that you do the thing; and take the joy of the consciousness that, as your art embraces a wider field than all others—and addresses a vaster multitude than all others—and is surer of audience than all others—so it is profounder and holier in Fellowship than all others. The artist, when his pupil is perfect, must see him leave his side that he may declare his distinct, perhaps opponent, skill. Man of science wrestles with man of science for priority of discovery, and pursues in pangs of jealous haste his solitary inquiry. You alone are called by kindness—by necessity—by equity, to fraternity, of toil; and thus, in those misty and massive piles which rise above the domestic roofs of our ancient cities, there was—

there may be again—a meaning more profound and true than any that fancy so commonly has attached to them. Men say 'their pinnacles point to heaven. Why, so does every tree that buds, and every bird that rises as it sings. Men say their aisles are good for worship. Why, so is every mountain glen and rough sea-shore. But this they have, of distinct and indisputable glory—that their mighty walls were never raised, and never shall be, but by men who love and aid each other in their weakness; that all their interlacing strength of vaulted stone has its foundation upon the stronger arches of manly fellowship, and all their changing grace of depressed or lifted pinnacle owes its cadence and completeness to sweeter symmetries of human soul.







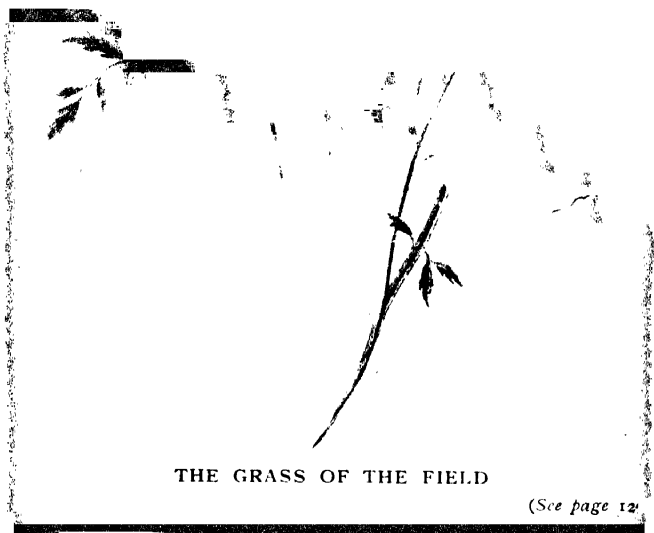
## LECTURE V

### THE WORK OF IRON, IN NATURE, ART, AND POLICY

WHEN first I heard that you wished me to address you this evening, it was a matter of some doubt with me whether I could find any subject that would possess any sufficient interest for you to justify my bringing you out of your comfortable houses on a winter's night. When I venture to speak about my own special business of art, it is almost always before students of art, among whom I may sometimes permit myself to be dull, if I can feel that I am useful: but a mere talk about art, especially without examples to refer to (and I have been unable to prepare any careful illustrations for this lecture), is seldom of much interest to a general audience. As I was considering what you might best bear with me in speaking about, there came naturally into my mind a subject connected with the origin and present prosperity of the town you live in; and, it seemed to me, in the out-branchings of it, capable of a very general interest. When, long ago (I am afraid to think how long), Tunbridge Wells was my Switzerland, and I used to be brought down here in the summer, a sufficiently active child, rejoicing in the hope of clambering sandstone cliffs of stupendous height above the common, there used sometimes, as I suppose there are in the lives of all children at the Wells, to be dark days in my life—days of condemnation to the pantiles and band—under which calamities my only consolation used to be in watching, at every turn in my walk, the welling forth of the spring over the orange rim of its marble basin. The memory of the clear water, sparkling over its saffron stain, came back to me as the strongest image connected with the place; and it struck me that you might not be unwilling, to-night, to think a little over the full significance of that saffron stain, and of the power, in other ways and other functions, of the steely element to which so many here owe returning strength and life—chief







THE GRASS OF THE FIELD

(See page 12)



as it has been always, and is yet more and more markedly so day by day, among the precious gifts of the earth.

The subject is, of course, too wide to be more than suggestively treated; and even my suggestions must be few, and drawn chiefly from my own fields of work; nevertheless, I think I shall have time to indicate some courses of thought which you may afterwards follow out for yourselves if they interest you; and so I will not shrink from the full scope of the subject which I have announced to you—the functions of Iron, in Nature, Art, and Policy.

Without more preface, I will take up the first head.

I. IRON IN NATURE.—You all probably know that the ochreous stain, which, perhaps, is often thought to spoil the basin of your spring, is iron in a state of rust: and when you see rusty iron in other places you generally think, not only that it spoils the places it stains, but that it is spoiled itself—that rusty iron is spoiled iron.

For most of our uses it generally is so; and because we cannot use a rusty knife or razor so well as a polished one, we suppose it to be a great defect in iron that it is subject to rust. But not at all. On the contrary, the most perfect and useful state of it is that ochreous stain; and therefore it is endowed with so ready a disposition to get itself into that state. It is not a fault in the iron, but a virtue, to be so fond of getting rusted, for in that condition it fulfils its most important functions in the universe, and most kindly duties to mankind. Nay, in a certain sense, and almost a literal one, we may say that iron rusted is Living; but when pure or polished, Dead. You all probably know that in the mixed air we breathe, the part of it essentially needful to us is called oxygen; and that this substance is to all animals, in the most accurate sense of the word, “breath of life.” The nervous power of life is a different thing; but the supporting element of the breath, without which the blood, and therefore the life, cannot be nourished, is this oxygen. Now it is this very same air which the iron breathes when it gets rusty. It takes the oxygen from the atmosphere as eagerly as we do, though it uses it differently. The iron keeps all that it gets; we, and other animals, part with it again; but the metal absolutely keeps what it has once received of this aerial gift; and the ochreous dust which we so much despise is, in fact, just so much nobler than pure iron, in so far as it is *iron and the air*. Nobler, and more

useful—for, indeed, as I shall be able to show you presently—the main service of this metal, and of all other metals, to us, is not in making knives, and scissors, and pokers, and pans, but in making the ground we feed from, and nearly all the substances first needful to our existence. For these are all nothing but metals and oxygen—metals with breath put into them. Sand, lime, clay, and the rest of the earth—potash and soda, and the rest of the alkalies—are all of them metals which have undergone this, so to speak, vital change, and have been rendered fit for the service of man by permanent unity with the purest air which he himself breathes. There is only one metal which does not rust readily; and that, in its influence on Man hitherto, has caused Death rather than Life; it will not be put to its right use till it is made a pavement of, and so trodden under foot.

Is there not something striking in this fact, considered largely as one of the types, or lessons, furnished by the inanimate creation? Here you have your hard, bright, cold, lifeless metal—good enough for swords and scissors—but not for food. You think, perhaps, that your iron is wonderfully useful in a pure form, but how would you like the world, if all your meadows, instead of grass, grew nothing but iron wire—if all your arable ground, instead of being made of sand and clay, were suddenly turned into flat surfaces of steel—if the whole earth, instead of its green and glowing sphere, rich with forest and flower, showed nothing but the image of the vast furnace of a ghastly engine—a globe of black, lifeless, excoriated metal? It would be that—probably it was once that; but assuredly it would be, were it not that all the substance of which it is made sucks and breathes the brilliancy of the atmosphere; and, as it breathes, softening from its merciless hardness, it falls into fruitful and beneficent dust; gathering itself again into the earths from which we feed, and the stones with which we build—into the rocks that frame the mountains, and the sands that bind the sea.

Hence, it is impossible for you to take up the most insignificant pebble at your feet, without being able to read, if you like, this curious lesson in it. You look upon it at first as if it were earth only. Nay, it answers, “I am no earth—I am earth and air in one; part of that blue heaven which you love, and long for, is already in me; it is all my life—without it I should be nothing, and able for nothing;

I could not minister to you, nor nourish you—I should be a cruel and helpless thing; but, because there is, according to my need and place in creation, a kind of soul in me, I have become capable of good, and helpful in the circles of vitality.”

Thus far the same interest attaches to all the earths, and all the metals of which they are made; but a deeper interest, and larger beneficence belong to that ochreous earth of iron which stains the marble of your springs. It stains much besides that marble. It stains the great earth wheresoever you can see it, far and wide—it is the colouring substance appointed to colour the globe for the sight, as well as subdue it to the service of man. You have just seen your hills covered with snow, and, perhaps, have enjoyed, at first, the contrast of their fair white with the dark blocks of pine woods; but have you ever considered how you would like them always white—not pure white, but dirty white—the white of thaw, with all the chill of snow in it, but none of its brightness? That is what the colour of the earth would be without its iron; that would be its colour, not here or there only, but in all places, and at all times. Follow out that idea till you get it in some detail. Think first of your pretty gravel walks in your gardens, yellow and fine, like plots of sunshine between the flower-beds; fancy them all suddenly turned to the colour of ashes. That is what they would be without iron ochre. Think of your winding walks over the common, as warm to the eye as they are dry to the foot, and imagine them all laid down suddenly with grey cinders. Then pass beyond the common into the country, and pause at the first ploughed field that you see sweeping up the hillsides in the sun, with its deep brown furrows, and wealth of ridges all a-glow, heaved aside by the ploughshare, like deep folds of a mantle of russet velvet—fancy it all changed suddenly into grisly furrows in a field of mud. That is what it would be without iron. Pass on, in fancy, over hill and dale, till you reach the bending line of the sea shore; go down upon its breezy beach—watch the white foam flashing among the amber of it, and all the blue sea embayed in belts of gold: then fancy those circlets of far sweeping shore suddenly put into mounds of mourning—all those golden sands turned into grey slime; the fairies no more able to call to each other: “Come unto these yellow sands”; but “Come unto these drab sands.” That is what they would be, without iron.

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Iron is in some sort, therefore, the sunshine and light of landscape, so far as that light depends on the ground; but it is a source of another kind of sunshine, quite as important to us in the way we live at present—sunshine, not of landscape, but of dwelling-place.

In these days of swift locomotion I may doubtless assume that most of my audience have been somewhere out of England—have been in Scotland, or France, or Switzerland. Whatever may have been their impression, on returning to their own country, of its superiority or inferiority in other respects, they cannot but have felt one thing about it—the comfortable look of its towns and villages. Foreign towns are often very picturesque, very beautiful, but they never have quite that look of warm self-sufficiency and wholesome quiet with which our villages nestle themselves down among the green fields. If you will take the trouble to examine into the sources of this impression, you will find that by far the greater part of that warm and satisfactory appearance depends upon the rich scarlet colour of the bricks and tiles. It does not belong to the neat building—very neat building has an uncomfortable rather than a comfortable look—but it depends on the *warm* building; our villages are dressed in red tiles as our old women are in red cloaks; and it does not matter how worn the cloaks, or how bent and bowed the roof may be, so long as there are no holes in either one or the other, and the sobered but unextinguishable colour still glows in the shadow of the hood, and burns among the green mosses of the gable. And what do you suppose dyes your tiles of cottage roof? You don't paint them. It is Nature who puts all that lovely vermilion into the clay for you; and all that lovely vermilion is this oxide of iron. Think, therefore, what your streets of towns would become—ugly enough, indeed, already, some of them, but still comfortable-looking—if instead of that warm brick red, the houses became all pepper-and-salt colour. Fancy your country villages changing from that homely scarlet of theirs which, in its sweet suggestion of laborious peace, is as honourable as the soldiers' scarlet of laborious battle—suppose all those cottage roofs, I say, turned at once into the colour of unbaked clay, the colour of street gutters in rainy weather. That's what they would be, without iron.

There is, however, yet another effect of colour in our

English country towns which, perhaps, you may not all yourselves have noticed, but for which you must take the word of a sketcher. They are not so often merely warm scarlet as they are warm purple—a more beautiful colour still: and they owe this colour to a mingling with the vermilion of the deep greyish or purple hue of our fine Welsh slates on the more respectable roofs, made more blue still by the colour of intervening atmosphere. If you examine one of these Welsh slates freshly broken, you will find its purple colour clear and vivid; and although never strikingly so after it has been long exposed to weather, it always retains enough of the tint to give rich harmonies of distant purple in opposition to the green of our woods and fields. Whatever brightness or power there is in the hue is entirely owing to the oxide of iron. Without it the slates would either be pale stone colour, or cold grey, or black.

Thus far we have only been considering the use and pleasantness of iron in the common earth of clay. But there are three kinds of earth which in mixed mass and prevalent quantity form the world. Those are, in common language, the earths of clay, of lime, and of flint. Many other elements are mingled with these in sparing quantities; but the great frame and substance of the earth is made of these three, so that wherever you stand on solid ground, in any country of the globe, the thing that is mainly under your feet will be either clay, limestone, or some condition of the earth of flint, mingled with both.

These being what we have usually to deal with, Nature seems to have set herself to make these three substances as interesting to us, and as beautiful for us, as she can. The clay, being a soft and changeable substance, she doesn't take much pains about, as we have seen, till it is baked; she brings the colour into it only when it receives a permanent form. But the limestone and flint she paints, in her own way, in their native state: and her object in painting them seems to be much the same as in her painting of flowers; to draw us, careless and idle human creatures, to watch her a little, and see what she is about—that being on the whole good for us, her children. For Nature is always carrying on very strange work with this limestone and flint of hers: laying down beds of them at the bottom of the sea; building islands out of the sea; filling chinks and veins in mountains

with curious treasures; petrifying mosses, and trees, and shells; in fact, carrying on all sorts of business, subterranean or submarine, which it would be highly desirable for us, who profit and live by it, to notice as it goes on. And apparently to lead us to do this, she makes picture-books for us of limestone and flint; and tempts us, like foolish children as we are, to read her books by the pretty colours in them. The pretty colours in her limestone-books form those variegated marbles which all mankind have taken delight to polish and build with from the beginning of time; and the pretty colours in her flint-books form those agates, jaspers, cornelian, bloodstones, onyxes, cairngorms, chrysoprases, which men have in like manner taken delight to cut, and polish, and make ornaments of, from the beginning of time; and yet, so much of babies are they, and so fond of looking at the pictures instead of reading the book, that I question whether, after six thousand years of cutting and polishing, there are above two or three people out of any given hundred, who know, or care to know, how a bit of agate or a bit of marble was made, or painted.

How it was made, may not be always very easy to say; but with what it was painted there is no manner of question. All those beautiful violet veinings and variegations of the marbles of Sicily and Spain, the glowing orange and amber colours of those of Siena, the deep russet of the Rosso antico, and the blood-colour of all the precious jaspers that enrich the temples of Italy; and, finally, all the lovely transitions of tint in the pebbles of Scotland and the Rhine, which form, though not the most precious, by far the most interesting portion of our modern jewellers' work—all these are painted by Nature with this one material only, variously proportioned and applied—the oxide of iron that stains your Tunbridge springs.

But this is not all, nor the best part of the work of iron. Its service in producing these beautiful stones is only rendered to rich people, who can afford to quarry and polish them. But Nature paints for all the world, poor and rich together; and while, therefore, she thus adorns the innermost rocks of her hills, to tempt your investigation, or indulge your luxury—she paints, far more carefully, the outsides of the hills, which are for the eyes of the shepherd and the ploughman. I spoke just now of the effect in the roofs of our villages of their purple slates; but if the slates

are beautiful even in their flat and formal rows on house-roofs, much more are they beautiful on the rugged crests and flanks of their native mountains. Have you ever considered, in speaking as we do so often of distant blue hills, what it is that makes them blue? To a certain extent it is distance; but distance alone will not do it. Many hills look white, however distant. That lovely dark purple colour of our Welsh and Highland hills is owing, not to their distance merely, but to their rocks. Some of their rocks are, indeed, too dark to be beautiful, being black or ashy grey, owing to imperfect and porous structure. But when you see this dark colour dashed with russet and blue, and coming out in masses among the green ferns, so purple that you can hardly tell at first whether it is rock or heather, then you must thank your old Tunbridge friend, the oxide of iron.

But this is not all. It is necessary for the beauty of hill scenery that Nature should colour not only her soft rocks, but her hard ones; and she colours them with the same thing, only more beautifully. Perhaps you have wondered at my use of the word "purple," so often of stones; but the Greeks, and still more the Romans, who had profound respect for purple, used it of stone long ago. You have all heard of "porphyry" as among the most precious of the harder massive stones. The colour which gave it that noble name, as well as that which gives the flush to all the rosy granite of Egypt—yes, and to the rosiest summits of the Alps themselves—is still owing to the same substance—your humble oxide of iron.

And last of all:

A nobler colour than all these—the noblest colour ever seen on this earth—one which belongs to a strength greater than that of the Egyptian granite, and to a beauty greater than that of the sunset or the rose—is still mysteriously connected with the presence of this dark iron. I believe it is not ascertained on what the crimson of blood actually depends; but the colour is connected, of course, with its vitality, and that vitality with the existence of iron as one of its substantial elements.

Is it not strange to find this stern and strong metal mingled so delicately in our human life, that we cannot even blush without its help? Think of it, my fair and gentle hearers; how terrible the alternative—sometimes you have actually no choice but to be brazen-faced, or iron-faced!

In this slight review of some of the functions of the metal, you observe that I confine myself strictly to its operations as a colouring element. I should only confuse your conception of the facts, if I endeavoured to describe its uses as a substantial element, either in strengthening rocks, or influencing vegetation by the decomposition of rocks. I have not, therefore, even glanced at any of the more serious uses of the metal in the economy of nature. But what I wish you to carry clearly away with you is the remembrance that in all these uses the metal would be nothing without the air. The pure metal has no power, and never occurs in Nature at all except in meteoric stones, whose fall no one can account for, and which are useless after they have fallen: in the necessary work of the world, the iron is invariably joined with the oxygen, and would be capable of no service or beauty whatever without it.

II. IRON IN ART.—Passing, then, from the offices of the metal in the operations of Nature to its uses in the hands of man, you must remember, in the outset, that the type which has been thus given you, by the lifeless metal, of the action of body and soul together, has noble antitype in the operation of all human power. All art worthy the name is the energy—neither of the human body alone, nor of the human soul alone, but of both united, one guiding the other: good craftsmanship and work of the fingers, joined with good emotion and work of the heart.

There is no good art, nor possible judgment of art, when these two are not united; yet we are constantly trying to separate them. Our amateurs cannot be persuaded but that they may produce some kind of art by their fancy or sensibility, without going through the necessary manual toil. That is entirely hopeless. Without a certain number, and that a very great number, of steady acts of hand—a practice as careful and constant as would be necessary to learn any other manual business—no drawing is possible. On the other side, the workman, and those who employ him, are continually trying to produce art by trick or habit of fingers, without using their fancy or sensibility. That also is hopeless. Without mingling of heart-passion with hand-power, no art is possible.\* The highest art unites both in their intensest degrees: the action of the hand at its finest, with that of the heart at its fullest.

\* No fine art, that is. See the previous definition of fine art at p. 43.

Hence it follows that the utmost power of art can only be given in a material capable of receiving and retaining the influence of the subtlest touch of the human hand. That hand is the most perfect agent of the material power existing in the universe; and its full subtlety can only be shown when the material it works on, or with, is entirely yielding. The chords of a perfect instrument will receive it, but not of an imperfect one; the softly bending point of the hair pencil, and soft melting of colour, will receive it, but not even the chalk or pen point, still less the steel point, chisel, or marble. The hand of a sculptor may, indeed, be as subtle as that of a painter, but all its subtlety is not bestowable nor expressible: the touch of Titian, Correggio, or Turner \* is a far more marvellous piece of nervous action than can be shown in anything but colour, or in the very highest conditions of executive expression in music. In proportion as the material worked upon is less delicate, the execution necessarily becomes lower, and the art with it. This is one main principle of all work. Another is that whatever the material you choose to work with, your art is base if it does not bring out the distinctive qualities of that material.

The reason of this second law is, that if you don't want the qualities of the substance you use, you ought to use some other substance: it can be only affectation, and desire to display your skill, that lead you to employ a refractory substance, and therefore your art will all be base. Glass, for instance, is eminently, in its nature, transparent. If you don't want transparency, let the glass alone. Do not try to make a window look like an opaque picture, but take an opaque ground to begin with. Again, marble is eminently a solid and massive substance. Unless you want mass and solidity, don't work in marble. If you wish for lightness, take wood; if for freedom, take stucco; if for ductility, take glass. Don't try to carve feathers, or trees, or nets, or foam, out of marble. Carve white limbs and broad breasts only out of that.

So again iron is eminently a ductile and tenacious substance—tenacious above all things, ductile more than most. When you want tenacity, therefore, and involved form, take iron. It is eminently made for that. It is the material given to the sculptor as the companion of marble, with a message, as plain as it can well be spoken, from the lips of the

\* See Appendix IV. p. 141: Subtlety of Hand.

earth-mother: "Here's for you to cut, and here's for you to hammer. Shape this, and twist that. What is solid and simple, carve out; what is thin and entangled, beat out. I give you all kinds of forms to be delighted in—fluttering leaves as well as fair bodies; twisted branches as well as open brows. The leaf and the branch you may beat and drag into their imagery: the body and brow you shall reverently touch into their imagery. And if you choose rightly and work rightly, what you do shall be safe afterwards. Your slender leaves shall not break off in my tenacious iron, though they may be rusted a little with an iron autumn. Your broad surfaces shall not be unsmoothed in my pure crystalline marble—no decay shall touch them. But if you carve in the marble what will break with a touch, or mould in the metal what a stain of rust or verdigris will spoil, it is your fault—not mine."

These are the main principles in this matter; which, like nearly all other right principles in art, we moderns delight in contradicting as directly and specially as may be. We continually look for, and praise, in our exhibitions, the sculpture of veils, and lace, and thin leaves, and all kinds of impossible things pushed as far as possible in the fragile stone, for the sake of showing the sculptor's dexterity.\* On the other hand, we *cast* our iron into bars—brittle, though an inch thick—sharpen them at the ends, and consider fences, and other work, made of such materials, decorative! I do not believe it would be easy to calculate the amount of mischief done to our taste in England by that fence iron-work of ours alone. If it were asked of us, by a single characteristic, to distinguish the dwellings of a country into two broad sections; and to set, on one side, the places where people were, for the most part, simple, happy, benevolent, and honest; and, on the other side, the places where at least a great number of the people were sophisticated, unkind, uncomfortable, and unprincipled, there is, I think, one

\* I do not mean to attach any degree of blame to the effort to represent leafage in marble for certain expressive purposes. The later works of Mr. Munro have depended for some of their most tender thoughts on a delicate and skilful use of such accessories. And in general, leaf-sculpture is good and admirable, if it renders, as in Gothic work, the grace and lightness of the leaf by the arrangement of light and shadow—supporting the masses well by strength of stone below; but all carving is base which proposes to itself *slightness* as an aim, and tries to imitate the absolute thinness of thin or slight things, as much modern wood-carving does. I saw in Italy, a year or two ago, a marble sculpture of birds' nests.

feature that you could fix upon as a positive test; the uncomfortable and unprincipled parts of a country would be the parts where people lived among iron railings and the comfortable and principled parts where they had none. A broad generalisation, you will say! Perhaps a little too broad; yet, in all sobriety, it will come truer than you think. Consider every other kind of fence or defence, and you will find some virtue in it; but in the iron railing none. There is, first, your castle rampart of stone—somewhat too grand to be considered here among our types of fencing; next, your garden or park wall of brick, which has indeed often an unkind look on the outside, but there is more modesty in it than unkindness. It generally means, not that the builder of it wants to shut you out from the view of his garden, but from the view of himself: it is a frank statement that as he needs a certain portion of time to himself, so he needs a certain portion of ground to himself, and must not be stared at when he digs there in his shirt-sleeves, or plays at leapfrog with his boys from school, or talks over old times with his wife, walking up and down in the evening sunshine. Besides, the brick wall has good practical service in it, and shelters you from the east wind, and ripens your peaches and nectarines, and glows in autumn like a sunny bank. And, moreover, your brick wall, if you build it properly, so that it shall stand long enough, is a beautiful thing when it is old, and has assumed its grave purple red, touched with mossy green.

Next to your lordly wall, in dignity of enclosure, comes your close-set wooden paling, which is more objectionable, because it commonly means enclosure on a larger scale than people want. Still it is significative of pleasant parks, and well-kept field walks, and herds of deer, and other such aristocratic pastoralisms, which have here and there their proper place in a country, and may be passed without any discredit.

Next to your paling, comes your low stone dyke, your mountain fence, indicative at a glance either of wild hill country, or of beds of stone beneath the soil; the hedge of the mountains—delightful in all its associations, and yet more in the varied and craggy forms of the loose stones it is built of: and next to the low stone wall, your lowland hedge, either in trim line of massive green, suggestive of the pleasantries of old Elizabethan houses, and smooth alleys for aged feet, and quaint labyrinths for young ones, or else



in fair entanglement of eglantine and virgin's bower, tossing its scented luxuriance along our country waysides:—how many such you have here among your pretty hills, fruitful with black clusters of the bramble for boys in autumn, and crimson hawthorn-berries for birds in winter. And then last, and most difficult to class among fences, comes your handrail, expressive of all sorts of things; sometimes having a knowing and vicious look, which it learns at racecourses; sometimes an innocent and tender look, which it learns at rustic bridges over cressy brooks; and sometimes a prudent and protective look, which it learns on passes of the Alps, where it has posts of granite and bars of pine, and guards the brows of cliffs and the banks of torrents. So that in all these kinds of defence there is some good, pleasant, or noble meaning. But what meaning has the iron railing? Either, observe, that you are living in the midst of such bad characters that you must keep them out by main force of bar, or that you are yourself of a character requiring to be kept inside in the same manner. Your iron railing always means thieves outside, or Bedlam inside; it *can* mean nothing else than that. If the people outside were good for anything, a hint in the way of fence would be enough for them; but because they are violent and at enmity with you, you are forced to put the close bars and the spikes at the top. Last summer I was lodging for a little while in a cottage in the country, and in front of my low window there were, first, some beds of daisies, then a row of gooseberry and currant bushes, and then a low wall about three feet above the ground, covered with stone-cress. Outside, a corn-field, with its green ears glistening in the sun, and a field path through it, just past the garden gate. From my window I could see every peasant of the village who passed that way, with basket on arm for market, or spade on shoulder for field. When I was inclined for society, I could lean over my wall, and talk to anybody; when I was inclined for science, I could botanise all along the top of my wall—there were four species of stone-cress alone growing on it; and when I was inclined for exercise, I could jump over my wall, backwards and forwards. That's the sort of fence to have in a Christian country; not a thing which you can't walk inside of without making yourself look like a wild beast, nor look at out of your window in the morning without expecting to see somebody impaled upon it in the night.

And yet farther, observe that the iron railing is a useless fence—it can shelter nothing, and support nothing; you can't nail your peaches to it, nor protect your flowers with it, nor make anything whatever out of its costly tyranny; and besides being useless, it is an insolent fence; it says plainly to everybody who passes: "You may be an honest person—but, also, you may be a thief: honest or not, you shall not get in here, for I am a respectable person, and much above you; you shall only see what a grand place I have got to keep you out of—look here, and depart in humiliation."

This, however, being in the present state of civilisation a frequent manner of discourse, and there being unfortunately many districts where the iron railing is unavoidable, it yet remains a question whether you need absolutely make it ugly, no less than significative of evil. You must have railings round your squares in London, and at the sides of your areas; but need you therefore have railings so ugly that the constant sight of them is enough to neutralise the effect of all the schools of art in the kingdom? You need not. Far from such necessity, it is even in your power to turn all your police force of iron bars actually into drawing masters, and natural historians. Not, of course, without some trouble and some expense; you can do nothing much worth doing, in this world, without trouble, you can get nothing much worth having, without expense. The main question is only—what is worth doing and having:—Consider, therefore, if this be not. Here is your iron railing, as yet, an uneducated monster; a sombre seneschal, incapable of any words, except his perpetual "Keep out!" and "Away with you!" Would it not be worth some trouble and cost to turn this ungainly ruffian porter into a well-educated servant; who, while he was severe as ever in forbidding entrance to evilly-disposed people, should yet have a kind word for well-disposed people, and a pleasant look, and a little useful information at his command, in case he should be asked a question by the passers-by?

We have not time to-night to look at many examples of ironwork; and those I happen to have by me are not the best: ironwork is not one of my special subjects of study; so that I only have memoranda of bits that happened to come into picturesque subjects which I was drawing for other reasons. Besides, external ironwork is more difficult

to find good than any other sort of ancient art; for when it gets rusty and broken, people are sure, if they can afford it, to send it to the old iron shop, and get a fine new grating instead; and in the great cities of Italy, the old iron is thus nearly all gone: the best bits I remember in the open air were at Brescia—fantastic sprays of laurel-like foliage rising over the garden gates; and there are a few fine fragments at Verona, and some good trellis-work enclosing the Scala tombs; but on the whole, the most interesting pieces, though by no means the purest in style, are to be found in out-of-the-way provincial towns, where people do not care, or are unable, to make polite alterations. The little town of Bellinzona, for instance, on the south of the Alps, and that of Sion on the north, have both of them complete schools of ironwork in their balconies and vineyard gates. That of Bellinzona is the best, though not very old—I suppose most of it of the seventeenth century; still it is very quaint and beautiful. Here, for example, at the commencement, are two balconies, from two different houses; one has been a cardinal's, and the hat is the principal ornament of the balcony; its tassels being wrought with delightful delicacy and freedom; and catching the eye clearly even among the mass of rich wreathed leaves. These tassels and strings are precisely the kind of subject fit for ironwork—noble in ironwork, they would have been entirely ignoble in marble, on the grounds above stated. The real plant of oleander standing in the window enriches the whole group of lines very happily.

The other balcony, from a very ordinary-looking house in the same street, is much more interesting in its details. It is shown in the plate as it appeared last summer, with convolvulus twined about the bars, the arrow-shaped living leaves mingled among the leaves of iron; but you may see in the centre of these real leaves a cluster of lighter ones, which are those of the ironwork itself. This cluster is worth giving a little larger to show its treatment. Fig. 7 (in Appendix V.) is the front view of it: Fig. 9, its profile. It is composed of a large tulip in the centre; then two turkscap lilies; then two pinks, a little conventionalised; then two narcissi; then two nondescripts, or, at least, flowers I do not know; and then two dark buds, and a few leaves. I say, *dark* buds, for all these flowers have been coloured in their original state. The plan of the

group is exceedingly simple: it is all enclosed in a pointed arch (Fig. 8, Appendix V.): the large mass of the tulip forming the apex; a six-foiled star on each side; then a jagged star; then a five-foiled star; then an unjagged star or rose; finally a small bud, so as to establish relation and cadence through the whole group. The profile is very free and fine, and the upper bar of the balcony exceedingly beautiful in effect—none the less so on account of the marvellously simple means employed. A thin strip of iron is bent over a square rod; out of the edge of this strip are cut a series of triangular openings—widest at top, leaving projecting teeth of iron (Appendix, Fig. 10); then each of these projecting pieces gets a little sharp tap with the hammer in front, which breaks its edge inwards, tearing it a little open at the same time, and the thing is done.

The common forms of Swiss ironwork are less naturalistic than these Italian balconies, depending more on beautiful arrangements of various curve; nevertheless, there has been a rich naturalist school at Fribourg, where a few bell-handles are still left, consisting of rods branched into laurel and other leafage. At Geneva, modern improvements have left nothing; but at Annecy, a little good work remains; the balcony of its old hotel de ville especially, with a trout of the lake—presumably the town arms—forming its central ornament.

I might expatiate all night—if you would sit and hear me—on the treatment of such required subject, or introduction of pleasant caprice by the old workmen: but we have no more time to spare, and I must quit this part of our subject—the rather as I could not explain to you the intrinsic merit of such ironwork without going fully into the theory of curvilinear design; only let me leave with you this one distinct assertion—that the quaint beauty and character of many natural objects, such as intricate branches, grass, foliage (especially thorny branches and prickly foliage), as well as that of many animals, plumed, spined, or bristled, is sculpturally expressible in iron only, and in iron would be majestic and impressive in the highest degree; and that every piece of metal work you use might be, rightly treated, not only a superb decoration, but a most valuable abstract of portions of natural forms, holding in dignity precisely the same relation to the painted representation of plants, that a statue does to the painted form

of man. It is difficult to give you an idea of the grace and interest which the simplest objects possess when their forms are thus abstracted from among the surrounding of rich circumstance which in Nature disturbs the feebleness of our attention. In Plate 2, facing page 104, a few blades of common green grass, and a wild leaf or two—just as they were thrown by Nature—are thus abstracted from the associated redundancy of the forms about them, and shown on a dark ground: every cluster of herbage would furnish fifty such groups, and every such group would work into iron (fitting it, of course, rightly to its service) with perfect ease, and endless grandeur of result.

III. IRON IN POLICY.—Having thus obtained some idea of the use of iron in art, as dependent on its ductility, I need not, certainly, say anything of its uses in manufacture and commerce; we all of us know enough—perhaps a little too much—about *them*. So I pass lastly to consider its uses in policy; dependent chiefly upon its tenacity—that is to say, on its power of bearing a pull, and receiving an edge. These powers, which enable it to pierce, to bind, and to smite, render it fit for the three great instruments, by which its political action may be simply typified; namely, the Plough, the Fetter, and the Sword.

On our understanding the right use of these three instruments, depend, of course, all our power as a nation, and all our happiness as individuals.

1. THE PLOUGH.—I say, first, on our understanding the right use of the plough, with which, in justice to the fairest of our labourers, we must always associate that feminine plough—the needle. The first requirement for the happiness of a nation is that it should understand the function in this world of these two great instruments: a happy nation may be defined as one in which the husband's hand is on the plough, and the housewife's on the needle; so in due time reaping its golden harvest, and shining in golden vesture: and an unhappy nation is one which, acknowledging no use of plough nor needle, will assuredly at last find its storehouse empty in the famine, and its breast naked to the cold.

Perhaps you think this is a mere truism, which I am wasting your time in repeating. I wish it were.

By far the greater part of the suffering and crime which exist at this moment in civilised Europe, arises simply

from people not understanding this truism—not knowing that produce or wealth is eternally connected by the laws of heaven and earth with resolute labour; but hoping in some way to cheat or abrogate this everlasting law of life, and to feed where they have not furrowed, and be warm where they have not woven.

I repeat, nearly all our misery and crime result from this one misapprehension. The law of Nature is, that a certain quantity of work is necessary to produce a certain quantity of good, of any kind whatever. If you want knowledge, you must toil for it: if food, you must toil for it, and if pleasure, you must toil for it. But men do not acknowledge this law, or strive to evade it, hoping to get their knowledge, and food, and pleasure for nothing; and in this effort they either fail of getting them, and remain ignorant and miserable, or they obtain them by making other men work for their benefit; and then they are tyrants and robbers. Yes, and worse than robbers. I am not one who in the least doubts or disputes the progress of this century in many things useful to mankind; but it seems to me a very dark sign respecting us that we look with so much indifference upon dishonesty and cruelty in the pursuit of wealth. In the dream of Nebuchadnezzar it was only the *feet* that were part of iron and part of clay; but many of us are now getting so cruel in our avarice, that it seems as if, in us, the *heart* were part of iron, part of clay.

From what I have heard of the inhabitants of this town, I do not doubt but that I may be permitted to do here what I have found it usually thought elsewhere highly improper and absurd to do, namely, trace a few Bible sentences to their practical result.

You cannot but have noticed how often in those parts of the Bible which are likely to be oftenest opened when people look for guidance, comfort, or help in the affairs of daily life, namely, the Psalms and Proverbs, mention is made of the guilt attaching to the *Oppression* of the poor. Observe; not the neglect of them, but the *Oppression* of them: the word is as frequent as it is strange. You can hardly open either of those books, but somewhere in their pages you will find a description of the wicked man's attempts against the poor: such as:

"He doth ravish the poor when he getteth him into his net."

•

"He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages; his eyes are privily set against the poor."

"In his pride he doth persecute the poor, and blesseth the covetous, whom God abhorreth."

"His mouth is full of deceit and fraud; in the secret places doth he murder the innocent. Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread? They have drawn out the sword, and bent the bow, to cast down the poor and needy."

"They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression."

"Pride compasseth them about as a chain, and violence as a garment."

"Their poison is like the poison of a serpent. Ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth."

Yes: "Ye weigh the violence of your hands": weigh these words as well. The last things we ever usually think of weighing are Bible words. We like to dream and dispute over them; but to weigh them, and see what their true contents are—anything but that. Yet, weigh these; for I have purposely taken all these verses, perhaps more striking to you read in this connection, than separately in their places, out of the Psalms, because, for all people belonging to the Established Church of this country these Psalms are appointed lessons, portioned out to them by their clergy to be read once through every month. Presumably, therefore, whatever portions of Scripture we may pass by or forget, these, at all events, must be brought continually to our observance as useful for direction of daily life. Now, do we ever ask ourselves what the real meaning of these passages may be, and who these wicked people are, who are "murdering the innocent"? You know it is rather singular language this!—rather strong language, we might, perhaps, call it—hearing it for the first time. Murder! and murder of innocent people!—nay, even a sort of cannibalism. Eating people—yes, and God's people, too—eating *My* people as if they were bread! swords drawn, bows bent, poison of serpents mixed! violence of hands weighed, measured, and trafficked with as so much coin! where is all this going on? Do you suppose it was only going on in the time of David, and that nobody but Jews ever murder the poor? If so, it would surely be wiser not to m~~atter~~ and mumble for our daily lessons what does not

concern us; but if there be any chance that it may concern us, and if this description, in the Psalms, of human guilt is at all generally applicable, as the descriptions in the Psalms of human sorrow are, may it not be advisable to know wherein this guilt is being committed round about us, or by ourselves? and when we take the words of the Bible into our mouths in a congregational way, to be sure whether we mean merely to chant a piece of melodious poetry relating to other people (we know not exactly to whom), or to assert our belief in facts bearing somewhat stringently on ourselves and our daily business. And if you make up your minds to do this no longer, and take pains to examine into the matter, you will find that these strange words, occurring as they do, not in a few places only, but almost in every alternate psalm and every alternate chapter of proverb or prophecy, with tremendous reiteration, were not written for one nation or one time only; but for all nations and languages, for all places and all centuries; and it is as true of the wicked men now as ever it was of Nabal or Dives, that "his eyes are set against the poor."

Set *against* the poor, mind you. Not merely set *away* from the poor, so as to neglect or lose sight of them, but set *against*, so as to afflict and destroy them. This is the main point I want to fix your attention upon. You will often hear sermons about neglect or carelessness of the poor. But neglect and carelessness are not at all the points. The Bible hardly ever talks about neglect of the poor. It always talks of *oppression* of the poor—a very different matter. It does not merely speak of passing by on the other side, and binding up no wounds, but of drawing the sword and ourselves smiting the men down. It does not charge us with being idle in the pest-house, and giving no medicine, but with being busy in the pest-house, and giving much poison.

May we not advisedly look into this matter a little, even to-night, and ask first, Who are these poor?

No country is, or ever will be, without them: that is to say, without the class which cannot, on the average, do more by its labour than provide for its subsistence, and which has no accumulations of property laid by on any considerable scale. Now there are a certain number of this class whom we cannot oppress with much severity.



An able-bodied and intelligent workman—sober, honest, and industrious, will almost always command a fair price for his work, and lay by enough in a few years to enable him to hold his own in the labour market. But all men are not able-bodied, nor intelligent, nor industrious; and you cannot expect them to be. Nothing appears to me at once more ludicrous and more melancholy than the way the people of the present age usually talk about the morals of labourers. You hardly ever address a labouring man upon his prospects in life, without quietly assuming that he is to possess, at starting, as a small moral capital to begin with, the virtue of Socrates, the philosophy of Plato, and the heroism of Epaminondas. “Be assured, my good man (you say to him), that if you work steadily for ten hours a day all your life long, and if you drink nothing but water, or the very mildest beer, and live on very plain food, and never lose your temper, and go to church every Sunday, and always remain content in the position in which Providence has placed you, and never grumble, nor swear; and always keep your clothes decent, and rise early, and use every opportunity of improving yourself, you will get on very well, and never come to the parish.”

All this is exceedingly true; but before giving the advice so confidently, it would be well if we sometimes tried it practically ourselves, and spent a year or so at some hard manual labour, not of an entertaining kind—ploughing or digging, for instance, with a very moderate allowance of beer; nothing but bread and cheese for dinner; no papers nor muffins in the morning; no sofas nor magazines at night; one small room for parlour and kitchen; and a large family of children always in the middle of the floor. If we think we could, under these circumstances, enact Socrates or Epaminondas entirely to our own satisfaction, we shall be somewhat justified in requiring the same behaviour from our poorer neighbours; but if not, we should surely consider a little whether among the various forms of the oppression of the poor, we may not rank as one of the first and likeliest—the oppression of expecting too much from them.

But let this pass; and let it be admitted that we never can be guilty of oppression towards the sober, industrious, intelligent, exemplary labourer. There will always be in

the world some who are not altogether intelligent and exemplary; we shall, I believe, to the end of time find the majority somewhat unintelligent, a little inclined to be idle, and occasionally, on Saturday night, drunk; we must even be prepared to hear of reprobates who like skittles on Sunday morning better than prayers; and of unnatural parents who send their children out to beg instead of to go to school.

Now these are the kind of people whom you *can* oppress, and whom you do oppress, and that to purpose—and with all the more cruelty and the greater sting, because it is just their own fault that puts them into your power. You know the words about wicked people are: “He doth ravish the poor when he getteth him *into his net*.” This getting into the net is constantly the fault or folly of the sufferer—his own heedlessness or his own indolence; but after he is once in the net, the oppression of him, and making the most of his distress, are ours. The nets which we use against the poor are just those worldly embarrassments which either their ignorance or their improvidence are almost certain at some time or other to bring them into: then, just at the time when we ought to hasten to help them, and disentangle them, and teach them how to manage better in future, we rush forward to *pillage* them, and force all we can out of them in their adversity. For, to take one instance only, remember this is literally and simply what we do, whenever we buy, or try to buy, cheap goods—goods offered at a price which we know cannot be remunerative for the labour involved in them. Whenever we buy such goods, remember we are stealing somebody’s labour. Don’t let us mince the matter. I say, in plain Saxon, **STEALING**—taking from him the proper reward of his work, and putting it into our own pocket. You know well enough that the thing could not have been offered you at that price, unless distress of some kind had forced the producer to part with it. You take advantage of this distress, and you force as much out of him as you can under the circumstances. The old barons of the Middle Ages used, in general, the thumbscrew to extort property; we moderns use, in preference, hunger, or domestic affliction: but the fact of extortion remains precisely the same. Whether we force the man’s property from him by pinching his stomach, or pinching his fingers,

makes some difference anatomically;—morally, none whatsoever: we use a form of torture of some sort in order to make him give up his property; we use, indeed, the man's own anxieties, instead of the rack; and his immediate peril of starvation, instead of the pistol at the head; but otherwise we differ from Front de Bœuf, or Dick Turpin, merely in being less dexterous, more cowardly, and more cruel. More cruel, I say, because the fierce baron and the redoubted highwayman are reported to have robbed, at least by preference, only the rich; *we* steal habitually from the poor. We buy our liveries, and gild our prayer-books, with pilfered pence out of children's and sick men's wages, and thus ingeniously dispose a given quantity of Theft, so that it may produce the largest possible measure of delicately distributed suffering.

But this is only one form of common oppression of the poor—only one way of taking our hands off the plough-handle, and binding another's upon it. This first way of doing it is the economical way—the way preferred by prudent and virtuous people. The bolder way is the acquisitive way—the way of speculation. You know we are considering at present the various modes in which a nation corrupts itself, by not acknowledging the eternal connection between its plough and its pleasure—by striving to get pleasure, without working for it. Well, I say the first and commonest way of doing so is to try to get the product of other people's work, and enjoy it ourselves, by cheapening their labour in times of distress; then the second way is that grand one of watching the chances of the market—the way of speculation. Of course there are some speculations that are fair and honest—speculations made with our own money, and which do not involve in their success the loss, by others, of what we gain. But generally modern speculation involves much risk to others, with chance of profit only to ourselves; even in its best conditions it is merely one of the forms of gambling or treasure-hunting: it is either leaving the steady plough and the steady pilgrimage of life, to look for silver mines beside the way; or else it is the full stop beside the dice-tables in Vanity Fair—investing all the thoughts and passions of the soul in the fall of the cards, and choosing rather the wild accidents of idle fortune than the calm and accumulative rewards of toil. And this is destructive

enough, at least to our peace and virtue. But it is usually destructive of far more than *our* peace, or *our* virtue. Have you ever deliberately set yourselves to imagine and measure the suffering, the guilt, and the mortality caused necessarily by the failure of any large-dealing merchant, or largely-branched bank? Take it at the lowest possible supposition—count, at the fewest you choose, the families whose means of support have been involved in the catastrophe. Then, on the morning after the intelligence of ruin, let us go forth amongst them in earnest thought; let us use that imagination which we waste so often on fictitious sorrow, to measure the stern facts of that multitudinous distress; strike open the private doors of their chambers, and enter silently into the midst of the domestic misery; look upon the old men, who had reserved for their failing strength some remainder of rest in the evening-tide of life, cast helplessly back into its trouble and tumult; look upon the active strength of middle age suddenly blasted into incapacity—its hopes crushed, and its hardly earned rewards snatched away in the same instant—at once the heart withered, and the right arm snapped; look upon the piteous children, delicately nurtured, whose soft eyes, now large with wonder at their parents' grief, must soon be set in the dimness of famine; and, far more than all this, look forward to the length of sorrow beyond—to the hardest labour of life, now to be undergone either in all the severity of unexpected and inexperienced trial, or else, more bitter still, to be begun again, and endured for the second time, amidst the ruins of cherished hopes and the feebleness of advancing years, embittered by the continual sting and taunt of the inner feeling that it has all been brought about, not by the fair course of appointed circumstance, but by miserable chance and wanton treachery; and, last of all, look beyond this—to the shattered destinies of those who have faltered under the trial, and sunk past recovery to despair. And then consider whether the hand which has poured this poison into all the springs of life be one whit less guiltily red with human blood than that which literally pours the hemlock into the cup, or guides the dagger to the heart? We read with horror of the crimes of a Borgia or a Tophana; but there never lived Borgias such as live now in the midst of us. The cruel lady of Ferrara slew only in the strength of

passion—she slew only a few, those who thwarted her purposes or who vexed her soul; she slew sharply and suddenly, embittering the fate of her victims with no foretastes of destruction, no prolongations of pain; and, finally and chiefly, she slew, not without remorse, nor without pity. But *we*, in no storm of passion, in no blindness of wrath—we, in calm and clear and untempted selfishness, pour our poison—not for a few only, but for multitudes; not for those who have wronged us, or resisted, but for those who have trusted us and aided; we, not with sudden gift of merciful and unconscious death, but with slow waste of hunger and weary rack of disappointment and despair; we, last and chiefly, do our murdering, not with any pauses of pity or scorching of conscience, but in facile and forgetful calm of mind—and so, forsooth, read day by day, complacently, as if they meant any one else than ourselves, the words that for ever describe the wicked: “*The poison of asps is under their lips, and their feet are swift to shed blood.*”

You may, indeed, perhaps, think there is some excuse for many in this matter, just because the sin is so unconscious; that the guilt is not so great when it is unapprehended, and that it is much more pardonable to slay heedlessly than purposefully. I believe no feeling can be more mistaken, and that in reality, and in the sight of heaven, the callous indifference which pursues its own interests at any cost of life, though it does not definitely adopt the purpose of sin, is a state of mind at once more heinous and more hopeless than the wildest aberrations of ungoverned passion. There may be, in the last case, some elements of good and of redemption still mingled in the character; but, in the other, few or none. There may be hope for the man who has slain his enemy in anger—hope even for the man who has betrayed his friend in fear; but what hope for him who trades in unregarded blood, and builds his fortune on unrepented treason?

But, however this may be, and wherever you may think yourselves bound in justice to impute the greater sin, be assured that the question is one of responsibilities only, not of facts. The definite result of all our modern haste to be rich is assuredly, and constantly, the murder of a certain number of persons by our hands every year. I

have not time to go into the details of another—on the whole, the broadest and terriblest way in which we cause the destruction of the poor—namely, the way of luxury and waste, destroying, in improvidence, what might have been the support of thousands ; \* but if you follow out the subject for yourselves at home—and what I have endeavoured to lay before you to-night will only be useful to you if you do—you will find that wherever and whenever men are endeavouring to *make money hastily*, and to avoid the labour which Providence has appointed to be the only source of honourable profit; and also wherever and whenever they permit themselves to *spend it luxuriously*, without reflecting how far they are misguiding the labour of others; there and then, in either case, they are literally and infallibly causing, for their own benefit or their own pleasure, a certain annual number of human deaths; that, therefore, the choice given to every man born into this world is, simply, whether he will be a labourer, or an assassin: and that whosoever has not his hand on the Stilt of the plough, has it on the Hilt of the dagger.

It would also be quite vain for me to endeavour to follow out this evening the lines of thought which would be suggested by the other two great political users of iron in the Fetter and the Sword: a few words only I must permit myself respecting both.

2. THE FETTER.—As the plough is the typical instrument of industry, so the fetter is the typical instrument of the restraint or subjection necessary in a nation—either literally, for its evil-doers, or figuratively, in accepted laws, for its wise and good men. You have to choose between this figurative and literal use; for depend upon it, the more laws you accept, the fewer penalties you will have to endure, and the fewer punishments to enforce. For

\* The analysis of this error will be found completely carried out in my lectures on the political economy of art. And it is an error worth analysing; for until it is finally trodden under foot, no healthy political, economical, or moral action is possible in any state. I do not say this impetuously or suddenly, for I have investigated this subject as deeply, and as long, as my own special subject of art; and the principles of political economy which I have stated in those lectures are as sure as the principles of Euclid. Foolish readers doubted their certainty, because I told them I had “never read any books on Political Economy”! Did they suppose I had got my knowledge of art by reading books?

wise laws and just restraints are to a noble nation not chains, but chain mail—strength and defence, though something also of an encumbrance. And this necessity of restraint, remember, is just as honourable to man as the necessity of labour. You hear every day greater numbers of foolish people speaking about liberty, as if it were such an honourable thing: so far from being that, it is, on the whole, and in the broadest sense, dishonourable, and an attribute of the lower creatures. No human being, however great or powerful, was ever so free as a fish. There is always something that he must, or must not do; while the fish may do whatever he likes. All the kingdoms of the world put together are not half so large as the sea, and all the railroads and wheels that ever were, or will be, invented are not so easy as fins. You will find, on fairly thinking of it, that it is his Restraint which is honourable to man, not his Liberty; and, what is more, it is restraint which is honourable even in the lower animals. A butterfly is much more free than a bee; but you honour the bee more, just because it is subject to certain laws which fit it for orderly function in bee society. And throughout the world, of the two abstract things, liberty and restraint, restraint is always the more honourable. It is true, indeed, that in these and all other matters you can never reason finally from the abstraction, for both liberty and restraint are good when they are nobly chosen, and both are bad when they are basely chosen; but of the two, I repeat, it is restraint which characterises the higher creature, and betters the lower creature: and, from the ministering of the archangel to the labour of the insect—from the poisoning of the planets to the gravitation of a grain of dust—the power and glory of all creatures, and all matter, consist in their obedience, not in their freedom. The Sun has no liberty—a dead leaf has much. The dust of which you are formed has no liberty. Its liberty will come—with its corruption.

And, therefore, I say boldly, though it seems a strange thing to say in England; that as the first power of a nation consists in knowing how to guide the Plough, its second power consists in knowing how to wear the Fetter.

3. THE SWORD.—And its third power, which perfects it as a nation, consists in knowing how to wield the sword,

so that the three talismans of national existence are expressed in these three short words—Labour, Law, and Courage.

This last virtue we at least possess; and all that is to be alleged against us is that we do not honour it enough. I do not mean honour by acknowledgment of service, though sometimes we are slow in doing even that. But we do not honour it enough in consistent regard to the lives and souls of our soldiers. How wantonly we have wasted their lives you have seen lately in the reports of their mortality by disease, which a little care and science might have prevented; but we regard their souls less than their lives, by keeping them in ignorance and idleness, and regarding them merely as instruments of battle. The argument brought forward for the maintenance of a standing army usually refers only to expediency in the case of unexpected war, whereas, one of the chief reasons for the maintenance of an army is the advantage of the military system as a method of education. The most fiery and headstrong, who are often also the most gifted and generous of your youths, have always a tendency both in the lower and upper classes to offer themselves for your soldiers: others, weak and unserviceable in a civil capacity, are tempted or entrapped into the army in a fortunate hour for them: out of this fiery or uncouth material, it is only soldier's discipline which can bring the full value and power. Even at present, by mere force of order and authority, the army is the salvation of myriads; and men who, under other circumstances, would have sunk into lethargy or dissipation, are redeemed into noble life by a service which at once summons and directs their energies. How much more than this military education is capable of doing, you will find only when you make it education indeed. We have no excuse for leaving our private soldiers at their present level of ignorance and want of refinement, for we shall invariably find that, both among officers and men, the gentlest and best informed are the bravest; still less have we excuse for diminishing our army, either in the present state of political events, or, as I believe, in any other conjunction of them that for many a year will be possible in this world.

\* You may, perhaps, be surprised at my saying this; perhaps surprised at my implying that war itself can be



right, or necessary, or noble at all. Nor do I speak of all war as necessary, nor of all war as noble. Both peace and war are noble or ignoble according to their kind and occasion. No man has a profounder sense of the horror and guilt of ignoble war than I have: I have personally seen its effects, upon nations, of unmitigated evil, on soul and body, with perhaps as much pity, and as much bitterness of indignation, as any of those whom you will hear continually declaiming in the cause of peace. But peace may be sought in two ways. One way is as Gideon sought it, when he built his altar in Ophrah, naming it "God send peace," yet sought this peace that he loved, as he was ordered to seek it, and the peace was sent, in God's way: "the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon." And the other way of seeking peace is as Menahem sought it, when he gave the King of Assyria a thousand talents of silver, that "his hand might be with him." That is, you may either win your peace, or buy it: win it, by resistance to evil; buy it, by compromise with evil. You may buy your peace, with silenced consciences; you may buy it, with broken vows—buy it, with lying words—buy it, with base connivances—buy it, with the blood of the slain, and the cry of the captive, and the silence of lost souls—over hemispheres of the earth, while you sit smiling at your serene hearths, lisping comfortable prayers evening and morning, and counting your pretty Protestant beads (which are flat, and of gold, instead of round, and of ebony, as the monks' once were), and so mutter continually to yourselves "Peace, peace," when there is No peace; but only captivity and death, for you, as well as for those you leave unsaved—and yours darker than theirs.

I cannot utter to you what I would in this matter; we all see too dimly, as yet, what our great world-duties are, to allow any of us to try to outline their enlarging shadows. But think over what I *have* said, and as you return to your quiet homes to-night, reflect that their peace was not won for you by your own hands; but by theirs who long ago jeopardized their lives for you, their children; and remember that neither this inherited peace, nor any other, can be kept, but through the same jeopardy. No peace was ever won from Fate by subterfuge or agreement; no peace is ever in store for any of us, but that which we shall win

by victory over shame or sin—victory over the sin that oppresses, as well as over that which corrupts. For many a year to come, the sword of every righteous nation must be whetted to save or to subdue; nor will it be by patience of others' suffering, but by the offering of your own, that you will ever draw nearer to the time when the great change shall pass upon the iron of the earth;—when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; neither shall they learn war any more.





## APPENDIX I

### RIGHT AND WRONG

READERS who are using my *Elements of Drawing* may be surprised by my saying here that Tintoret may lead them wrong; while at page 345 of the *Elements* he is one of the six men named as being "always right."

I bring the apparent inconsistency forward at the beginning of this Appendix, because the illustration of it will be farther useful in showing the real nature of the self-contradiction which is often alleged against me by careless readers.

It is not only possible, but a frequent condition of human action, to *do* right and *be* right—yet so as to mislead other people if they rashly imitate the thing done. For there are many rights which are not absolutely, but relatively right—right only for *that* person to do under those circumstances—not for *this* person to do under other circumstances.

Thus it stands between Titian and Tintoret. Titian is always absolutely Right. You may imitate him with entire security that you are doing the best thing that can possibly be done for the purpose in hand. Tintoret is always relatively Right—relatively to his own aims and peculiar powers. But you must quite understand Tintoret before you can be sure what his aim was, and why he was then right in doing what would not be right always. If, however, you take the pains thus to understand him, he becomes entirely instructive and exemplary, just as Titian is; and therefore I have placed him among those who are "always right," and you can only study him rightly with that reverence for him.

Then the artists who are named as "admitting question of right and wrong," are those who from some mischance of circumstance or shortcoming in their education, do not always do right, even with relation to their own aims and powers.

Take for example the quality of imperfection in drawing

form. There are many pictures of Tintoret in which the trees are drawn with a few curved flourishes of the brush instead of leaves. That is (absolutely) wrong. If you copied the tree as a model, you would be going very wrong indeed. But it is relatively, and for Tintoret's purposes, right. In the nature of the superficial work you will find there must have been a cause for it. Somebody perhaps wanted the picture in a hurry to fill a dark corner. Tintoret good-naturedly did all he could—painted the figures tolerably—had five minutes left only for the trees, when the servant came. "Let him wait another five minutes." And this is the best foliage we can do in the time. Entirely, admirably, unsurpassably right, under the conditions. Titian would not have worked under them, but Tintoret was kinder and humbler; yet he may lead you wrong if you don't understand him. Or, perhaps, another day, somebody came in while Tintoret was at work, who tormented Tintoret. An ignoble person! Titian would have been polite to him, and gone on steadily with his trees. Tintoret cannot stand the ignobleness; it is unendurably repulsive and discomfiting to him. "The Black Plague take him—and the trees, too! Shall such a fellow see me paint!" And the trees go all to pieces. This, in you, would be mere ill-breeding and ill-temper. In Tintoret it was one of the necessary conditions of his intense sensibility; had he been capable, then, of keeping his temper, he could never have done his greatest works. Let the trees go to pieces, by all means; it is quite right they should; he is always right.

But in a background of Gainsborough you would find the trees unjustifiably gone to pieces. The carelessness of form there is definitely purposed by him—adopted as an advisable thing; and therefore it is both absolutely and relatively wrong—it indicates his being imperfectly educated as a painter, and not having brought out all his powers. It may still happen that the man whose work is thus partially erroneous is greater far than others who have fewer faults. Gainsborough's and Reynolds' wrongs are more charming than almost anybody else's right. Still, they occasionally *are* wrong—but the Venetians and Velasquez,\* never.

\* At least after his style was formed; early pictures, like the *Adoration of the Magi* in our Gallery, are of little value.

I ought, perhaps, to have added in that Manchester address (only one does not like to say things that shock people) some words of warning against painters likely to mislead the student. For indeed, though here and there something may be gained by looking at inferior men, there is always more to be gained by looking at the best; and there is not time, with all the looking of human life, to exhaust even one great painter's instruction. How then shall we dare to waste our sight and thoughts on inferior ones, even if we could do so, which we rarely can, without danger of being led astray? Nay, strictly speaking, what people call inferior painters are in general *no* painters. Artists are divided by an impassable gulf into the men who can paint, and who cannot. The men who can paint often fall short of what they should have done;—are repressed or defeated, or otherwise rendered inferior one to another: still there is an everlasting barrier between them and the men who cannot paint—who can only in various popular ways pretend to paint. And if once you know the difference, there is always some good to be got by looking at a real painter—seldom anything but mischief to be got out of a false one; but do not suppose real painters are common. I do not speak of living men; but among those who labour no more, in this England of ours, since it first had a school, we have had only five real painters—Reynolds, Gainsborough, Hogarth, Richard Wilson, and Turner.

The reader may, perhaps, think I have forgotten Wilkie. No. I once much overrated him as an expressional draughtsman, not having then studied the figure long enough to be able to detect superficial sentiment. But his colour I have never praised; it is entirely false and valueless. And it would be unjust to English art if I did not here express my regret that the admiration of Constable, already harmful enough in England, is extending even into France. There was perhaps, the making, in Constable, of a second- or third-rate painter, if any careful discipline had developed in him the instincts which, though unparalleled for narrowness, were, as far as they went, true. But as it is, he is nothing more than an industrious and innocent amateur, blundering his way to a superficial expression of one or two popular aspects of common nature.

And my readers may depend upon it, that all blame

which I express in this sweeping way is trustworthy. I have often had to repent of overpraise of inferior men; and continually to repent of insufficient praise of great men; but of broad condemnation, never. For I do not speak it but after the most searching examination of the matter, and under stern sense of need for it: so that whenever the reader is entirely shocked by what I say, he may be assured every word is true.\* It is just because it so much offends him, that it was necessary: and knowing that it must offend him, I should not have ventured to say it, without certainty of its truth. I say "certainty," for it is just as possible to be certain whether the drawing of a tree or a stone is true or false, as whether the drawing of a triangle is; and what I mean primarily by saying that a picture is in all respects worthless, is that it is in all respects False: which is not a matter of opinion at all, but a matter of ascertainable fact, such as I never assert till I *have* ascertained. And the thing so commonly said about my writings, that they are rather persuasive than just; and that though my "language" may be good, I am an unsafe guide in art criticism, is, like many other popular estimates in such matters, not merely untrue, but precisely the reverse of the truth; it is truth, like reflections in water, distorted much by the shaking receptive surface, and in every particular, upside down. For my "language," until within the last six or seven years, was loose, obscure, and more or less feeble; and still, though I have tried hard to mend it, the best I can do is inferior to much contemporary work. No description that I have ever given of anything is worth four lines of Tennyson; and in serious thought, my half-pages are generally only worth about as much as a single sentence either of his, or of Carlyle's. They are, I well trust, as true and necessary; but they are neither so concentrated nor so well put. But I am an entirely safe guide in art judgment: and that simply as the necessary result of my having given the labour of life to the determination of facts, rather than to the following of feelings or theories.

\* He must, however, be careful to distinguish blame—however strongly expressed, of some special fault or error in a true painter—from these general statements of inferiority or worthlessness. Thus he will find me continually laughing at Wilson's tree-painting; not because Wilson could not paint, but because he had never looked at a tree.

•



Not, indeed, that my work is free from mistakes; it admits many, and always must admit many, from its scattered range; but, in the long run, it will be found to enter sternly and searchingly into the nature of what it deals with, and the kind of mistake it admits is never dangerous—consisting, usually, in pressing the truth too far. It is quite easy, for instance, to take an accidental irregularity in a piece of architecture, which less careful examination would never have detected at all, for an intentional irregularity; quite possible to misinterpret an obscure passage in a picture, which a less earnest observer would never have tried to interpret. But mistakes of this kind—honest, enthusiastic mistakes—are never harmful; because they are always made in a true direction—fall forward on the road, not into the ditch beside it; and they are sure to be corrected by the next comer. But the blunt and dead mistakes made by too many other writers on art—the mistakes of sheer inattention, and want of sympathy—are mortal. The entire purpose of a great thinker may be difficult to fathom, and we may be over and over again more or less mistaken in guessing at his meaning; but the real, profound, nay, quite bottomless, and unredeemable mistake, is the fool's thought—that he had *no* meaning.

I do not refer, in saying this, to any of my statements respecting subjects which it has been my main work to study: as far as I am aware, I have never yet misinterpreted any picture of Turner's, though often remaining blind to the half of what he had intended: neither have I as yet found anything to correct in my statements respecting Venetian architecture;\* but in casual references to what has been quickly seen, it is impossible to guard wholly against error, without losing much valuable observation, true in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, and harmless even when erroneous.

\* The subtle proportions of the Byzantine Palaces, given in precise measurements in the second volume of *The Stones of Venice*, were alleged by architects to be accidental irregularities. They will be found, by every one who will take the pains to examine them, most assuredly and indisputably intentional—and not only so, but one of the principal subjects of the designer's care.

## APPENDIX II

### REYNOLD'S DISAPPOINTMENT

It is very fortunate that in the fragment of Mason's MSS., published lately by Mr. Cotton in his *Sir Joshua Reynolds' Notes*, record is preserved of Sir Joshua's feelings respecting the paintings in the window of New College, which might otherwise have been supposed to give his full sanction to this mode of painting on glass. Nothing can possibly be more curious to my mind, than the great painter's expectations; or his having at all entertained the idea that the qualities of colour which are peculiar to opaque bodies could be obtained in a transparent medium; but so it is: and with the simplicity and humbleness of an entirely great man he hopes that Mr. Jervas on glass is to excel Sir Joshua on canvas. Happily, Mason tells us the result.

"With the copy Jervas made of this picture he was grievously disappointed. 'I had frequently,' he said to me, 'pleased myself by reflecting, after I had produced what I thought a brilliant effect of light and shadow on my canvas, how greatly that effect would be heightened by the transparency which the painting on glass would be sure to produce. It turned out quite the reverse.'"

## APPENDIX III

### CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

THIS passage in the lecture was illustrated by an enlargement of the woodcut (Fig. 6); but I did not choose to disfigure the middle of the book with it. It is copied from

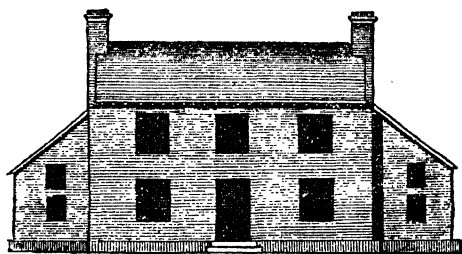


FIG. 6.

the 49th plate of the third edition of *The Encyclopædia Britannica* (Edinburgh, 1797), and represents an English farmhouse arranged on classical principles. If the reader cares to consult the work itself, he will find in the same plate another composition of similar propriety, and dignified by the addition of a pediment, beneath the shadow of which “a private gentleman who has a small family may find conveniency.”

## APPENDIX IV

### SUBTLETY OF HAND

I HAD intended in one or other of these lectures to have spoken at some length of the quality of refinement in Colour, but found the subject would lead me too far. A few words are, however, necessary in order to explain some expressions in the text.

"Refinement in colour," is indeed a tautological expression, for colour, in the true sense of the word, does not exist until it *is* refined. Dirt exists—stains exist—and pigments exist, easily enough in all places; and are laid on easily enough by all hands; but colour exists only where there is tenderness, and can be laid on only by a hand which has strong life in it. The law concerning colour is very strange, very noble, in some sense almost awful. In every given touch laid on canvas, if one grain of the colour is inoperative, and does not take its full part in producing the hue, the hue will be imperfect. The grain of colour which does not work is dead. It infects all about it with its death. It must be got quit of, or the touch is spoiled. We acknowledge this instinctively in our use of the phrases "dead colour," "killed colour," "foul colour." Those words are, in some sort, literally true. If more colour is put on than is necessary, a heavy touch when a light one would have been enough, the quantity of colour that was not wanted, and is overlaid by the rest, is as dead, and it pollutes the rest. There will be no good in the touch.

The art of painting, properly so called, consists in laying on the least possible colour that will produce the required result, and this measurement, in all the ultimate, that is to say, the principal operations of colouring, is so delicate that not one human hand in a million has the required lightness. The final touch of any painter properly so named, of Correggio—Titian—Turner—or Reynolds—would be always quite invisible to anyone watching the progress of the work, the films of hue being laid thinner

than the depths of the grooves in mother-of-pearl. The work may be swift, apparently careless, nay, to the painter himself almost unconscious. Great painters are so organised that they do their best work without effort; but analyse the touches afterwards, and you will find the structure and depth of the colour laid mathematically demonstrable to be of literally infinite fineness, the last touches passing away at their edges by untraceable gradation. The very essence of a master's work may thus be removed by a picture-cleaner in ten minutes.

Observe, however, this thinness exists only in portions of the ultimate touches, for which the preparation may often have been made with solid colours, commonly, and literally, called "dead colouring," but even that is always subtle if a master lays it—subtle at least in drawing, if simple in hue; and farther, observe that the refinement of work consists not in laying absolutely *little* colour, but in always laying precisely the right quantity. To lay on little needs indeed the rare lightness of hand; but to lay much—yet not one atom *too* much, and obtain subtlety, not by withholding strength, but by precision of pause—that is the master's final sign-manual—power, knowledge, and tenderness all united. A great deal of colour may often be wanted; perhaps quite a mass of it, such as shall project from the canvas; but the real painter lays this mass of its required thickness and shape with as much precision as if it were a bud of a flower which he had to touch into blossom; one of Turner's loaded fragments of white cloud is modelled and gradated in an instant, as if it alone were the subject of the picture, when the same quantity of colour under another hand, would be a lifeless lump.

The following extract from a letter in *The Literary Gazette* of 13th November, 1858, which I was obliged to write to defend a questioned expression respecting Turner's subtlety of hand from a charge of hyperbole, contains some interesting and conclusive evidence on the point, though it refers to pencil and chalk drawing only:—

"I must ask you to allow me yet leave to reply to the objections you make to two statements in my catalogue, as those objections would otherwise diminish its usefulness. I have asserted that, in a given drawing (named as one of the chief in the series), Turner's pencil did not move over the thousandth of an inch without meaning; and you

charge this expression with extravagant hyperbole. On the contrary, it is much within the truth, being merely a mathematically accurate description of fairly good execution in either drawing or engraving. It is only necessary to measure a piece of any ordinarily good work to ascertain this. Take, for instance, Finden's engraving at the 180th page of Rogers' poems; in which the face of the figure, from the chin to the top of the brow, occupies just a quarter of an inch, and the space between the upper lip and chin as nearly as possible one-seventeenth of an inch. The whole mouth occupies one-third of this space, say one-fiftieth of an inch, and within that space both the lips and the much more difficult inner corner of the mouth are perfectly drawn and rounded, with quite successful and sufficiently subtle expression. Any artist will assure you that in order to draw a mouth as well as this, there must be more than twenty gradations of shade in the touches; that is to say, in this case, gradations changing, with meaning, within less than the thousandth of an inch.

"But this is mere child's play compared to the refinement of any first-rate mechanical work—much more of brush or pencil drawing by a master's hand. In order at once to furnish you with authoritative evidence on this point, I wrote to Mr. Kingsley, tutor, of Sidney-Sussex College, a friend to whom I always have recourse when I want to be precisely right in any matter: for his great knowledge both of mathematics and of natural science is joined, not only with singular powers of delicate experimental manipulation, but with a keen sensitiveness to beauty in art. His answer, in its final statement respecting Turner's work, is amazing even to me, and will, I should think, be more so to your readers. Observe the successions of measured and tested refinement: here is No. 1:—

"'The finest mechanical work that I know, which is not optical, is that done by Nobert in the way of ruling lines. I have a series ruled by him on glass, giving actual scales from .000024 and .000016 of an inch, perfectly correct to these places of decimals, and he has executed others as fine as .000012, though I do not know how far he could repeat these last with accuracy.'

"This is No. 1, of precision. Mr. Kingsley proceeds to No. 2:

"'But this is rude work compared to the accuracy

necessary for the construction of the object-glass of a microscope such as Rosse turns out.'

"I am sorry to omit the explanation which follows of the ten lenses composing such a glass, 'each of which must be exact in radius and in surface, and all have their axes coincident': but it would not be intelligible without the figure by which it is illustrated; so I pass to Mr. Kingsley's No. 3:

"'I am tolerably familiar,' he proceeds, 'with the actual grinding and polishing of lenses and specula, and have produced by my own hand some by no means bad optical work, and I have copied no small amount of Turner's work, and *I still look with awe at the combined delicacy and precision of his hand*; IT BEATS OPTICAL WORK OUT OF SIGHT. In optical work, as in refined drawing, the hand goes beyond the eye, and one has to depend upon the feel; and when one has once learned what a delicate affair touch is, one gets a horror of all coarse work, and is ready to forgive any amount of feebleness sooner than that boldness which is akin to impudence. In optics the distinction is easily seen when the work is put to trial; but here too, as in drawing, it requires an educated eye to tell the difference, when the work is only moderately bad; but with "bold" work, nothing can be seen but distortion and fog; and I heartily wish the same result would follow the same kind of handling in drawing; but here, the boldness cheats the unlearned by looking like the precision of the true man. It is very strange how much better our ears are than our eyes in this country: if an ignorant man were to be "bold" with a violin, he would not get many admirers, though his boldness was far below that of ninety-nine out of a hundred drawings one sees.'

"The words which I have put in italics in the above extract are those which were surprising to me. I knew that Turner's was as refined as any optical work, but had no idea of its going beyond it. Mr. Kingsley's word 'awe' occurring just before is, however, as I have often felt, precisely the right one. When once we begin at all to understand the handling of any truly great executor, such as that of any of the three great Venetians, of Correggio, or Turner, the awe of it is something greater than can be felt from the most stupendous natural scenery. For the creation of such a system as a high human intelligence,

endowed with its ineffably perfect instruments of eye and hand, is a far more appalling manifestation of Infinite Power, than the making either of seas or mountains.

"After this testimony to the completion of Turner's work, I need not at length defend myself from the charge of hyperbole in the statement that, 'as far as I know, the galleries of Europe may be challenged to produce one sketch \* that shall equal the chalk study No. 45, or the feeblest of the memoranda in the 71st and following frames'; which memoranda, however, it should have been observed, are stated at the 44th page to be in some respects 'the grandest work in grey that he did in his life.' For I believe that, as manipulators, none but the four men whom I have just named (the three Venetians and Correggio) were equal to Turner; and, as far as I know, none of those four ever put their full strength into sketches. But whether they did or not, my statement in the catalogue is limited by my own knowledge; and, as far as I can trust that knowledge, it is not an enthusiastic statement, but an entirely calm and considered one. It may be a mistake, but it is not a hyperbole."

\* A sketch, observe—not a finished drawing. Sketches are only proper subjects of comparison with each other when they contain about the same quantity of work; the test of their merit is the quantity of truth told with a given number of touches. The assertion in the Catalogue which this letter was written to defend, was made respecting the sketch of Rome, No. 101.







## APPENDIX V

I CAN only give, to illustrate this balcony, facsimiles of rough memoranda made on a single leaf of my notebook, with a tired hand; but it may be useful to young students to see them, in order that they may know the difference between notes made to get at the gist and heart of a thing, and notes made merely to look neat. Only it must be observed that the best characters of free drawing are always lost even in the most careful facsimile; and I should not show even these slight notes in woodcut imitation, unless the reader had it in his power, by a glance at the 21st or 35th plates in *Modern Painters* (and yet better, by trying to copy a piece of either of them), to

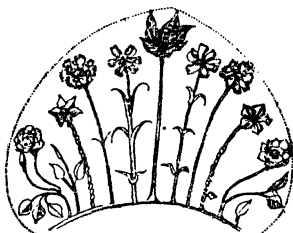


FIG. 7.



FIG. 8.

ascertain how far I can draw or not. I refer to these plates, because, though I distinctly stated in the Preface that they, together with the 12th, 20th, 34th, and 37th, were executed on the steel by my own hand (the use of the dry point in the foregrounds of the 12th and 21st plates being moreover wholly different from the common processes of etching), I find it constantly assumed that they were engraved for me—as if direct lying in such matters were a thing of quite common usage.

Fig. 7 is the centre-piece of the balcony, but a leaf-spray is omitted on the right-hand side, having been too much buried among the real leaves to be drawn.

• Fig. 8 shows the intended general effect of its masses,

the five-leaved and six-leaved flowers being clearly distinguishable at any distance.

Fig. 9 is its profile, rather carefully drawn at the top, to show the tulip and turkscap lily leaves. Underneath



FIG. 9.

there is a plate of iron beaten into broad thin leaves, which gives the centre of the balcony a gradual sweep outwards, like the side of a ship of war. This central profile is of the greatest importance in ironwork, as the flow of it affects the curves of the whole design, not merely in surface, as in marble carving, but in their intersections, when the side is seen through the front. The lighter leaves, *b b*, are real bindweed.

Fig. 10 shows two of the teeth of the border, illustrating



FIG. 10.

their irregularity of form, which takes place quite to the extent indicated.

Fig. 11 is the border at the side of the balcony, showing the most interesting circumstance in the treatment of the whole, namely, the enlargement and retraction of the teeth



FIG. 11.

of the cornice, as it approaches the wall. This treatment of the whole cornice as a kind of wreath round the balcony, having its leaves flung loose at the back, and set close at the front, as a girl would throw a wreath of leaves round her hair, is precisely the most finished indication of a good workman's mind to be found in the whole thing.

Fig. 12 shows the outline of the retracted leaves accurately.

It was noted in the text that the whole of this ironwork had been coloured. The difficulty of colouring ironwork rightly, and the necessity of doing it in some way or other, have been the principal reasons for my never having entered heartily into this subject; for all the ironwork I have ever seen look beautiful was rusty, and rusty iron will not

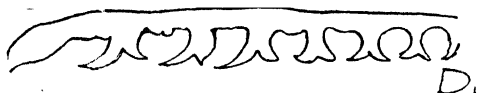


FIG. 12.

answer modern purposes. Nevertheless it may be painted; but it needs someone to do it who knows what painting means, and few of us do—certainly none, as yet, of our restorers of decoration or writers on colour.

It is a marvellous thing to me that book after book should appear on this last subject, without apparently the slightest consciousness on the part of the writers that the first necessity of beauty in colour is gradation, as the first necessity of beauty in lines is curvature—or that the second necessity in colour is mystery or subtlety, as the

second necessity in line is softness. Colour ungradated is wholly valueless; colour unmysterious is wholly barbarous. Unless it loses itself and melts away towards other colours, as a true line loses itself and melts away towards other lines, colour has no proper existence, in the noble sense of the word. What a cube, or tetrahedron, is to organic form, ungradated and unconfused colour is to organic colour; and a person who attempts to arrange colour harmonies without gradation of tint is in precisely the same category as an artist who should try to compose a beautiful picture out of an accumulation of cubes and parallelipeds.

The value of hue in all illuminations on painted glass of fine periods depends primarily on the expedients used to make the colours palpitate and fluctuate; *inequality* of brilliancy being the *condition* of brilliancy, just as inequality of accent is the condition of power and loveliness in sound. The skill with which the thirteenth century illuminators in books, and the Indians in shawls and carpets, use the minutest atoms of colour to gradate other colours, and confuse the eye, is the first secret in their gift of splendour: associated, however, with so many other artifices which are quite instinctive and unteachable, that it is of little use to dwell upon them. Delicacy of organisation in the designer given, you will soon have all, and without it, nothing. However, not to close my book with desponding words, let me set down, as many of us like such things, five Laws to which there is no exception whatever, and which, if they can enable no one to produce good colour, are at least, as far as they reach, accurately condemnatory of bad colour.

1. ALL GOOD COLOUR IS GRADATED. A blush rose (or, better still, a blush itself) is the type of rightness in arrangement of pure hue.

2. ALL HARMONIES OF COLOUR DEPEND FOR THEIR VITALITY ON THE ACTION AND HELPFUL OPERATION OF EVERY PARTICLE OF COLOUR THEY CONTAIN.

3. THE FINAL PARTICLES OF COLOUR NECESSARY TO THE COMPLETENESS OF A COLOUR HARMONY ARE ALWAYS INFINITELY SMALL; either laid by immeasurably subtle touches of the pencil, or produced by portions of the colouring substance, however distributed, which are so absolutely small as to become at the intended distance infinitely so to the eye.

4. NO COLOUR HARMONY IS OF HIGH ORDER UNLESS IT INVOLVES INDESCRIBABLE TINTS. It is the best possible sign of a colour when nobody who sees it knows what to call it, or how to give an idea of it to anyone else. Even among simple hues the most valuable are those which cannot be defined; the most precious purples will look brown beside pure purple, and purple beside pure brown; and the most precious greens will be called blue if seen beside pure green, and green if seen beside pure blue.

5. THE FINER THE EYE FOR COLOUR, THE LESS IT WILL REQUIRE TO GRATIFY IT INTENSELY. But that little must be supremely good and pure, as the finest notes of a great singer, which are so near to silence. And a great colourist will make even the absence of colour lovely, as the fading of the perfect voice makes silence sacred.

LECTURES  
ON  
ARCHITECTURE AND PAINTING  
DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH  
IN  
NOVEMBER 1853  
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR









## PREFACE

THE following Lectures are printed, as far as possible, just as they were delivered. Here and there a sentence which seemed obscure has been mended, and the passages which had not been previously written, have been, of course imperfectly, supplied from memory. But I am well assured that nothing of any substantial importance which was said in the lecture-room, is either omitted, or altered in its signification, with the exception only of a few sentences struck out from the notice of the works of Turner, in consequence of the impossibility of engraving the drawings by which they were illustrated, except at a cost which would have too much raised the price of the volume. Some elucidatory remarks have, however, been added at the close of the second and fourth Lectures, which I hope may be of more use than the passages which I was obliged to omit.

The drawings by which the Lectures on Architecture were illustrated have been carefully reduced, and well transferred to wood by Mr. Thurston Thompson. Those which were given in the course of the notices of schools of painting could not be so transferred, having been drawn in colour; and I have therefore merely had a few lines, absolutely necessary to make the text intelligible, copied from engravings.

I forgot, in preparing the second Lecture for the press, to quote a passage from Lord Lindsay's *Christian Art*, illustrative of what is said in that lecture (p. 207), respecting the energy of the mediæval republics. This passage, describing the circumstances under which the Campanile of the Duomo of Florence was built, is interesting also as noticing the universality of talent which was required of architects; and which, as I have asserted in the Addenda (p. 213), always ought to be required of them. I do not, however, now regret the omission, as I cannot easily imagine a better preface to an essay on civil architecture than this simple statement.

“ In 1332, Giotto was chosen to erect it (the Campanile) on the ground, avowedly, of the *universality* of his talents, with the appointment of Capo Maestro, or chief Architect (chief Master, I should rather write), of the Cathedral and its dependencies, a yearly salary of one hundred gold florins, and the privilege of citizenship, under the special understanding that he was not to quit Florence. His designs being approved of, the republic passed a decree in the spring of 1334, that the Campanile should be built so as to exceed in magnificence, height, and excellence of workmanship whatever in that kind had been achieved by the Greeks and Romans in the time of their utmost power and greatness. The first stone was laid, accordingly, with great pomp, on the 18th of July following, and the work prosecuted with vigour, and with such costliness, and utter disregard of expense, that a citizen of Verona, looking on, exclaimed, that the republic was taxing her strength too far, that the united resources of two great monarchs would be insufficient to complete it; a criticism which the Signoria resented by confining him for two months in prison, and afterwards conducting him through the public treasury, to teach him that the Florentines could build their whole city of marble, and not one poor steeple only, were they so inclined.”

I see that *The Builder*, vol. xi. p. 690, has been endeavouring to inspire the citizens of Leeds with some pride of this kind respecting their town-hall. The pride would be well, but I sincerely trust the tower in question may not be built on the design there proposed. I am sorry to have to write a special criticism, but it must be remembered that the best works, by the best men living, are in this age abused without mercy by nameless critics; and it would be unjust to the public, if those who have given their names as guarantee for their sincerity never had the courage to enter a protest against the execution of designs which appear to them unworthy.

DENMARK HILL, 16th April 1854.

# LECTURES

ON

## ARCHITECTURE & PAINTING

### LECTURE I

I THINK myself peculiarly happy in being permitted to address the citizens of Edinburgh on the subject of architecture, for it is one which, they cannot but feel, interests them nearly. Of all the cities in the British Islands, Edinburgh is the one which presents most advantages for the display of a noble building; and which, on the other hand, sustains most injury in the erection of a commonplace or unworthy one. You are all proud of your city: surely you must feel it a duty in some sort to justify your pride; that is to say, to give yourselves a *right* to be proud of it. That you were born under the shadow of its two fantastic mountains,—that you live where from your room windows you can trace the shores of its glittering Firth, are no rightful subjects of pride. You did not raise the mountains, nor shape the shores; and the historical houses of your Canongate, and the broad battlements of your castle, reflect honour upon you only through your ancestors. Before you boast of your city, before even you venture to call it *yours*, ought you not scrupulously to weigh the exact share you have had in adding to it or adorning it, to calculate seriously the influence upon its aspect which the work of your own hands has exercised? I do not say that, even when you regard your city in this scrupulous and testing spirit, you have not considerable ground for exultation. As far as I am acquainted with modern architecture, I am aware of no streets which, in simplicity and manliness of style, or general breadth and brightness of effect, equal those of the New Town of Edinburgh. But yet I am well persuaded that as you traverse those streets, your

feelings of pleasure and pride in them are much complicated with those which are excited entirely by the surrounding scenery. As you walk up or down George Street, for instance, do you not look eagerly for every opening to the north and south, which lets in the lustre of the Firth of Forth, or the rugged outline of the Castle Rock? Take away the sea-waves, and the dark basalt, and I fear you would find little to interest you in George Street by itself. Now I remember a city, more nobly placed even than your Edinburgh, which, instead of the valley that you have now filled by lines of railroad, has a broad and rushing river of blue water sweeping through the heart of it; which, for the dark and solitary rock that bears your castle, has an amphitheatre of cliffs crested with cypresses and olive; which, for the two masses of Arthur's Seat and the ranges of the Pentlands, has a chain of blue mountains higher than the haughtiest peaks of your Highlands; and which, for your far-away Ben Ledi and Ben More, has the great central chain of the St. Gothard Alps: and yet, as you go out of the gates, and walk in the suburban streets of that city—I mean Verona—the eye never seeks to rest on that external scenery, however gorgeous; it does not look for the gaps between the houses, as you do here; it may for a few moments follow the broken line of the great Alpine battlements; but it is only where they form a background for other battlements, built by the hand of man. There is no necessity felt to dwell on the blue river or the burning hills. The heart and eye have enough to do in the streets of the city itself; they are contented there; nay, they sometimes turn from the natural scenery, as if too savage and solitary, to dwell with a deeper interest on the palace walls that cast their shade upon the streets, and the crowd of towers that rise out of that shadow into the depth of the sky.

*That* is a city to be proud of, indeed; and it is this kind of architectural dignity which you should aim at, in what you add to Edinburgh or rebuild in it. For remember, you must either help your scenery or destroy it; whatever you do has an effect of one kind or the other; it is never indifferent. But, above all, remember that it is chiefly, by private, not by public, effort that your city must be adorned. It does not matter how many beautiful public buildings you possess, if they are not supported by, and in harmony with, the private houses of the town. Neither

the mind nor the eye will accept a new college, or a new hospital, or a new institution, for a city. It is the Canongate, and the Princes Street, and the High Street that are Edinburgh. It is in your own private houses that the real majesty of Edinburgh must consist; and, what is more, it must be by your own personal interest that the style of the architecture which rises around you must be principally guided. Do not think that you can have good architecture merely by paying for it. It is not by subscribing liberally for a large building once in forty years that you can call up architects and inspiration. It is only by active

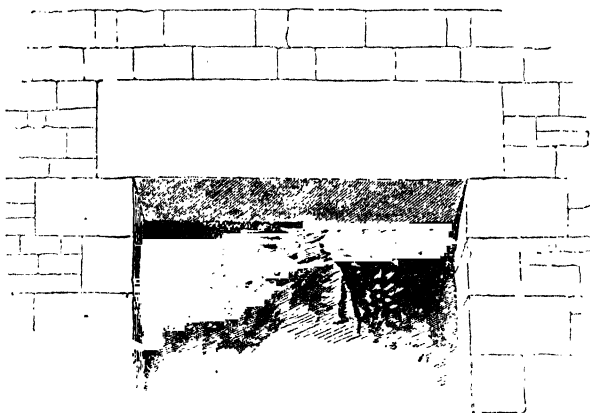


FIG. 13.

and sympathetic attention to the domestic and every-day work which is done for each of you, that you can educate either yourselves to the feeling, or your builders to the doing, of what is truly great.

Well but, you will answer, you cannot feel interested in architecture: you do not care about it, and *cannot* care about it. I know you cannot. About such architecture as is built nowadays, no mortal ever did or could care. You do not feel interested in *hearing* the same thing over and over again;—why do you suppose you can feel interested in *seeing* the same thing over and over again, were that thing even the best and most beautiful in the world? Now, you all know the kind of window which you usually build in Edinburgh: here (Fig. 13) is an example of the head of,



one, a massy lintel of a single stone, laid across from side to side, with bold square-cut jambs—in fact, the simplest form it is possible to build. It is by no means a bad form; on the contrary, it is very manly and vigorous, and has a certain dignity in its utter refusal of ornament. But I cannot say it is entertaining. How many windows precisely of this form do you suppose there are in the New Town of Edinburgh? I have not counted them all through the town, but I counted them this morning along this very Queen Street, in which your Hall is; and on the one side of that street, there are of these windows, absolutely similar to this example, and altogether devoid of any relief by decoration, six hundred and seventy-eight.\* And your decorations are just as monotonous as your simplicities. How many Corinthian and Doric columns do you think there are in your banks, and post-offices, institutions, and I know not what else, one exactly like another?—and yet you expect to be interested! Nay, but, you will answer me again, we see sunrises and sunsets, and violets and roses, over and over again, and we do not tire of *them*. What! did you ever see one sunrise like another? does not God vary His clouds for you every morning and every night? though, indeed, there is enough in the disappearing and appearing of the great orb above the rolling of the world, to interest all of us, one would think, for as many times as we shall see it; and yet the aspect of it is changed for us daily. You see violets and roses often, and are not tired of them. True! but you did not often see two roses alike, or, if you did, you took care not to put them beside each other in the same nosegay, for fear your nosegay should be uninteresting; and yet you think you can put 150,000 square windows side by side in the same streets, and still be interested by them. Why, if I were to say the same thing over and over again, for the single hour you are going to let me talk to you, would you listen to me? and yet you let your architects *do* the same thing over and over again for three centuries, and expect to be interested by their architecture; with a farther disadvantage on the side of the builder, as compared with the speaker, that my wasted words would cost you but little, but his wasted stones have cost you no small part of your incomes.

\* Including York Place, and Picardy Place, but not counting any window which has mouldings.

"Well, but," you still think within yourselves, "it is not *right* that architecture should be interesting. It is a

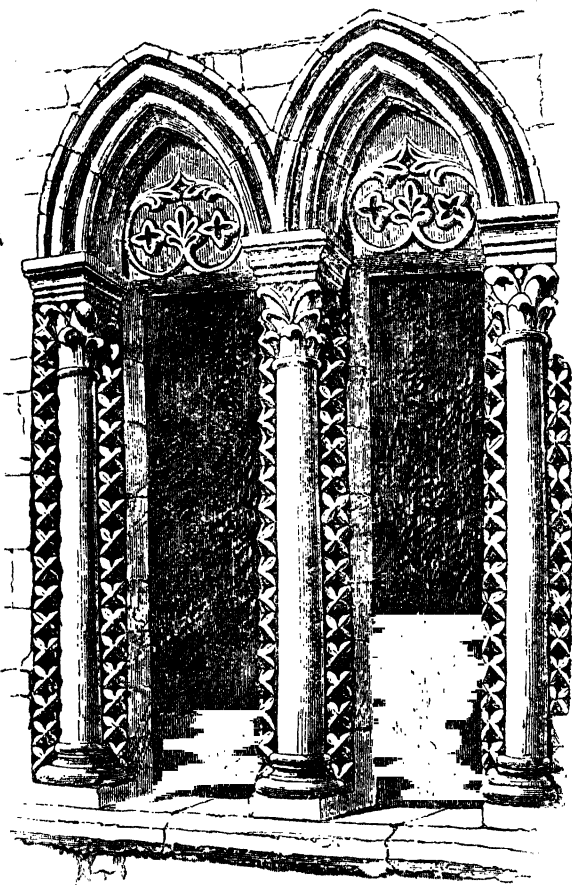


FIG. 14.

very grand thing, this architecture, but essentially unentertaining. It is its duty to be dull, it is monotonous by law: it cannot be correct and yet amusing."

- Believe me, it is not so. All things that are worth doing in art are interesting, and attractive when they are done.

There is no law of right which consecrates dulness. The proof of a thing's being right is, that it has power over the heart; that it excites us, wins us, or helps us. I do not say that it has influence over all, but it has over a large class, one kind of art being fit for one class, and another for another; and there is no goodness in art which is independent of the power of pleasing. Yet, do not mistake me; I do not mean that there is no such thing as neglect of the best art, or delight in the worst, just as many men neglect Nature, and feed upon what is artificial and base; but I mean, that all good art has the *capacity of pleasing*, if people will attend to it; that there is no law against its pleasing; but, on the contrary, something wrong either in the spectator or the art, when it ceases to please. Now, therefore, if you feel that your present school of architecture is unattractive to you, I say there is something wrong, either in the architecture or in you; and I trust you will not think I mean to flatter you when I tell you, that the wrong is *not* in you, but in the architecture. Look at this for a moment (Fig. 14); it is a window actually existing—a window of an English domestic building\*—a window built six hundred years ago. You will not tell me you have no pleasure in looking at this; or that you could not, by any possibility, become interested in the art which produced it; or that, if every window in your streets were of some such form, with perpetual change in their ornaments, you would pass up and down the street with as much indifference as now, when your windows are of *this* form (Fig. 13). Can you for an instant suppose that the architect was a greater or wiser man who built this, than he who built that? or that in the arrangement of these dull and monotonous stones there is more wit and sense than you can penetrate? Believe me, the wrong is not in you; you would all like the best things best, if you only saw them. What is wrong in you is your temper, not your taste; your patient and trustful temper, which lives in houses whose architecture it takes for granted, and subscribes to public edifices from which it derives no enjoyment.

"Well, but what are we to do?" you will say to me; we cannot make architects of ourselves. Pardon me, you

\* Oakham Castle. I have enlarged this illustration from Mr. Hudson Turner's admirable work on the domestic architecture of England.

can—and you ought. Architecture is an art for all men to learn, because all are concerned with it; and it is so simple, that there is no excuse for not being acquainted with its primary rules, any more than for ignorance of grammar or of spelling, which are both of them far more difficult sciences. Far less trouble than is necessary to learn how to play chess, or whist, or golf, tolerably,—far less than a schoolboy takes to win the meanest prize of the passing year, would acquaint you with all the main principles of the construction of a Gothic cathedral, and I believe you would hardly find the study less amusing. But be that as it may, there are one or two broad principles which need only be stated to be understood and accepted; and those I mean to lay before you, with your permission, before you leave this room.

You must all, of course, have observed that the principal distinctions between existing styles of architecture depend on their methods of roofing any space, as a window or door for instance, or a space between pillars; that is to say, that the character of Greek architecture, and of all that is derived from it, depends on its roofing a space with a single stone laid from side to side; the character of Roman architecture, and of all derived from it, depends on its roofing spaces with round arches; and the character of Gothic architecture depends on its roofing spaces with pointed arches, or gables. I need not, of course, in any way follow out for you the mode in which the Greek system of architecture is derived from the horizontal lintel; but I ought perhaps to explain, that by Roman architecture I do not mean that spurious condition of temple form which was nothing more than a luscious imitation of the Greek; but I mean that architecture in which the Roman spirit truly manifested itself, the magnificent vaultings of the aqueduct and the bath, and the colossal heaping of the rough stones in the arches of the amphitheatre; an architecture full of expression of gigantic power and strength of will, and from which are directly derived all our most impressive early buildings, called, as you know, by various antiquaries, Saxon, Norman, or Romanesque. Now the first point I wish to insist upon is, that the Greek system, considered merely as a piece of construction, is weak and barbarous compared with the two others. For instance, in the case of a large window or door, such as Fig. 13, if you

have at your disposal a single large and long stone you may indeed roof it in the Greek manner, as you have done here, with comparative security; but it is always expensive to obtain and to raise to their place stones of this large size, and in many places nearly impossible to obtain them at all: and if you have not such stones, and still insist upon roofing the space in the Greek way, that is



FIG. 15.

to say, upon having a square window, you must do it by the miserably feeble adjustment of bricks (Fig. 15).<sup>\*</sup> You are well aware, of course, that this latter is the usual way in which such windows are now built in England; you are fortunate enough here in the north to be able to obtain single stones, and this circumstance alone gives a considerable degree of grandeur to your buildings. But in all cases, and however built, you cannot but see in a moment that this cross bar is weak and imperfect. It may be strong enough for all immediate intents and purposes, but it is not so strong as it might be: however well the house is built, it will still not stand so long as if it had been better constructed; and there is hardly a day passes but you may see some rent or flaw in bad buildings of this kind. You may see one whenever you choose, in one of your most costly, and most ugly buildings, the great church with the dome, at the end of George Street. I think I never saw a building with a principal entrance so utterly ghastly and oppressive; and it is as weak as it is ghastly. The huge horizontal lintel above the door is already split right through. But you are not aware of a thousandth part of the evil: the pieces of building that you see are all carefully done; it is in the parts that are to be concealed by paint and plaster that the bad building of the day is thoroughly committed. The main mischief lies in the strange devices that are used to support the long horizontal cross beams of our larger apartments and shops, and the framework of unseen walls; girders and ties of cast iron, and props and wedges, and laths nailed and bolted together, on marvellously scientific principles; so scientific, that every now and then, when some tender reparation is undertaken by the unconscious householder, the whole house crashes into a heap of ruin, so total, that the jury which sits on the

<sup>\*</sup> On this subject see *The Builder*, vol. xi. p. 709.

bodies of the inhabitants cannot tell what has been the matter with it, and returns a dim verdict of accidental death. Did you read the account of the proceedings at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham the other day? Some dozen of men crushed up among the splinters of the scaffolding in an instant, nobody knew why. All the engineers declare the scaffolding to have been erected on the best principles,—that the fall of it is as much a mystery as if it had fallen from heaven, and were all meteoric stones. The jury go to Sydenham and look at the heap of shattered bolts and girders, and come back as wise as they went. Accidental death! Yes verily; the lives of all those dozen of men had been hanging for months at the mercy of a flaw in an inch or two of cast iron. Very accidental indeed! Not the less pitiable. I grant it not to be an easy thing to raise scaffolding to the height of the Crystal Palace without incurring some danger, but that is no reason why your houses should all be nothing but scaffolding. The common system of support of walls over shops is now nothing but permanent scaffolding; part of iron, part of wood, part of brick; in its skeleton state awful to behold; the weight of three or four storeys of wall resting sometimes on two or three pillars of the size of gas pipes, sometimes on a single cross beam of wood, laid across from party wall to party wall in the Greek manner. I have a vivid recollection at this moment of a vast heap of splinters in the Borough Road, close to St. George's, Southwark, in the road between my own house and London. I had passed it the day before, a goodly shop front, and sufficient house above, with a few repairs undertaken in the shop before opening a new business. The master and mistress had found it dusty that afternoon, and went out to tea. When they came back in the evening, they found their whole house in the form of a heap of bricks blocking the roadway, with a party of men digging out their cook. But I do not insist on casualties like these, disgraceful to us as they are, for it is, of course, perfectly possible to build a perfectly secure house or a secure window in the Greek manner; but the simple fact is, that in order to obtain in the cross lintel the same amount of strength which you can obtain in a pointed arch, you must go to an immensely greater cost in stone or in labour. Stonehenge is strong enough, but it takes some trouble to build in the manner of Stone-

henge: and Stonehenge itself is not so strong as an arch of the Colosseum. You could not raise a circle of four Stonehenges, one over the other, with safety; and as it is, more of the cross-stones are fallen upon the plain of Sarum than arches rent away, except by the hand of man, from the mighty circle of Rome. But I waste words;—your own common sense must show you in a moment that this is a weak form; and there is not at this instant a single street in London where some house could not be pointed out with a flaw running through its brickwork, and repairs rendered necessary in consequence, merely owing to the



FIG. 16.

adoption of this bad form; and that our builders know so well, that in myriads of instances you find them actually throwing concealed arches above the horizontal lintels to take the weight off them; and the gabled decoration at the top of some Palladian windows, is merely the ornamental form resulting from a bold device of the old Roman builders to effect the same purpose.

But there is a farther reason for our adopting the pointed arch than its being the strongest form; it is also the most beautiful form in which a window or door-head can be built. Not the most beautiful because it is the strongest; but most beautiful, because its form is one of those which, as we know by its frequent occurrence in the work of Nature

around us, has been appointed by the Deity to be an everlasting source of pleasure to the human mind.

Gather a branch from any of the trees or flowers to which the earth owes its principal beauty. You will find that every one of its leaves is terminated, more or less, in the form of the pointed arch; and to that form owes its grace and character. I will take, for instance, a spray of the tree which so gracefully adorns your Scottish glens and crags—there is no lovelier in the world—the common ash. Here is a sketch of the cluster of leaves which form the extremity of one of its young shoots (Fig. 16); and, by the way, it will furnish us with an interesting illustration of another error in modern architectural systems. You know how fond modern architects, like foolish modern politicians, are of their equalities and similarities; how necessary they think it that each part of a building should be like every other part. Now Nature abhors equality and similitude, just as much as foolish men love them. You will find that the ends of the

shoots of the ash are composed of four\* green stalks bearing leaves, springing in the form of a cross, if seen from above, as in Fig. 17, and at first you will suppose the four arms of the cross are equal. But look more closely, and you will find that two opposite arms or stalks have only five leaves each, and the other two have seven, or else, two have seven, and the



FIG. 17.

other two nine; but always one pair of stalks has two leaves more than the other pair. Sometimes the tree gets a little puzzled, and forgets which is to be the longest stalk, and begins with a stem for seven leaves where it should have nine, and then recollects itself at the last minute, and puts on another leaf in a great hurry, and so produces a stalk with eight leaves; but all this care it takes merely to keep itself out of equalities; and all its grace and power of pleasing are owing to its doing so, together with the lovely curves in which its stalks, thus arranged, spring from the main bough. Fig. 17 is a plan of their arrangement merely, but Fig. 16 is the way in which you are

\* \* Sometimes of six; that is to say, they spring in pairs; only the two uppermost pairs, sometimes the three uppermost, spring so close together as to appear one cluster.



most likely to see them: and observe, they spring from the stalk *precisely as a Gothic vaulted roof springs*, each stalk representing a rib of the roof, and the leaves its crossing stones; and the beauty of each of those leaves is altogether owing to its terminating in the Gothic form, the pointed arch. Now do you think you would have liked your ash trees as well if Nature had taught them Greek, and shown them how to grow according to the received Attic architectural rules of right? I will try you. Here is a cluster of

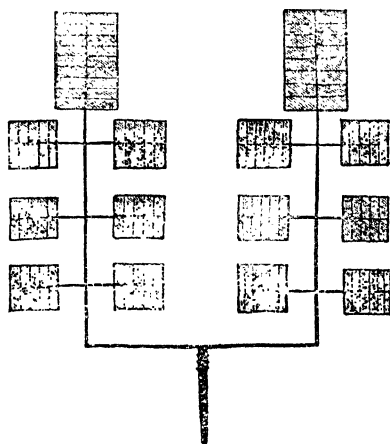


FIG. 18.

ash leaves, which I have grown expressly for you on Greek principles (Fig. 18). How do you like it?

Observe, I have played you no trick in this comparison. It is perfectly fair in all respects. I have merely substituted for the beautiful spring of the Gothic vaulting in the ash bough, a cross lintel, and then, in order to raise the leaves to the same height, I introduce vertical columns, and I make the leaves square-headed instead of pointed, and their lateral ribs at right angles with the central rib, instead of sloping from it. I have, indeed, only given you two boughs instead of four; because the perspective of the crossing ones could not have been given without confusing the figure; but I imagine you have quite enough of them as it is.

Nay, but some of you instantly answer, if we had been

as long accustomed to square-leaved ash trees as we have been to sharp-leaved ash trees, we should like them just as well. Do not think it. Are you not much more accustomed to grey whinstone and brown sandstone than you are to rubies or emeralds? and yet will you tell me you think them as beautiful? Are you not more accustomed to the ordinary voices of men than to the perfect accents of sweet-singing? yet do you not instantly declare the song to be loveliest? Examine well the channels of your admiration, and you will find that they are, in verity, as unchangeable as the channels of your heart's blood; that just as by the pressure of a bandage, or by unwholesome and perpetual action of some part of the body, that blood may be wasted or arrested, and in its stagnancy cease to nourish the frame, or in its disturbed flow affect it with incurable disease, so also admiration itself may, by the bandages of fashion, bound close over the eyes and the arteries of the soul, be arrested in its natural pulse and healthy flow; but that wherever the artificial pressure is removed, it will return into that bed which has been traced for it by the finger of God.

Consider this subject well, and you will find that custom has indeed no real influence upon our feelings of the beautiful, except in dulling and checking them; that is to say, it will and does, as we advance in years, deaden in some degree our enjoyment of all beauty, but it in no wise influences our determination of what is beautiful and what is not. You see the broad blue sky every day over your heads; but you do not for that reason determine blue to be less or more beautiful than you did at first; you are unaccustomed to see stones as blue as the sapphire, but you do not for that reason think the sapphire less beautiful than other stones. The blue colour is everlastingly appointed by the Deity to be a source of delight; and whether seen perpetually over your head, or crystallised once in a thousand years into a single and incomparable stone, your acknowledgment of its beauty is equally natural, simple, and instantaneous. Pardon me for engaging you in a metaphysical discussion; for it is necessary to the establishment of some of the greatest of all architectural principles that I should fully convince you of this great truth, and that I should quite do away with the various objections to it, which I suppose must arise in your minds. Of these there is one more which I must

briefly meet. You know how much confusion has been introduced into the subject of criticism, by reference to the power of Association over the human heart; you know how often it has been said that custom must have something to do with our ideas of beauty, because it endears so many objects to the affections. But, once for all, observe that the powers of association and of beauty are two entirely distinct powers,—as distinct, for instance, as the forces of gravitation and electricity. These forces may act together, or may neutralise one another, but are not for that reason to be supposed the same force; and the charm of association will sometimes enhance, and sometimes entirely overpower, that of beauty; but you must not confound the two together. You love many things because you are accustomed to them, and are pained by many things because they are strange to you; but that does not make the accustomed sight more beautiful, or the strange one less so. The well-known object may be dearer to you, or you may have discovered charms in it which others cannot; but the charm was there before you discovered it, only needing time and love to perceive it. You love your friends and relations more than all the world beside, and may perceive beauties in their faces which others cannot perceive; but you feel that you would be ridiculous in allowing yourselves to think them the most beautiful persons in the world: you acknowledge that the real beauty of the human countenance depends on fixed laws of form and expression, and not on the affection you bear to it, or the degree in which you are familiarised with it: and so does the beauty of all other existences.

Now, therefore, I think that, without the risk of any farther serious objection occurring to you, I may state what I believe to be the truth,—that beauty has been appointed by the Deity to be one of the elements by which the human soul is continually sustained; it is therefore to be found more or less in all natural objects, but in order that we may not satiate ourselves with it, and weary of it, it is rarely granted to us in its utmost degrees. When we see it in those utmost degrees, we are attracted to it strongly, and remember it long, as in the case of singularly beautiful scenery, or a beautiful countenance. On the other hand, absolute ugliness is admitted as rarely as perfect beauty; but degrees of it more or less distinct are associated with

whatever has the nature of death and sin, just as beauty is associated with what has the nature of virtue and of life.

This being so, you see that when the relative beauty of any particular forms has to be examined, we may reason, from the forms of Nature around us, in this manner:—what Nature does generally, is sure to be more or less beautiful; what she does rarely, will either be *very* beautiful, or absolutely ugly; and we may again easily determine, if we are not willing in such a case to trust our feelings, which of these is indeed the case, by this simple rule, that if the rare occurrence is the result of the complete fulfilment of a natural law, it will be beautiful; if of the violation of a natural law, it will be ugly. For instance, a sapphire is the result of the complete and perfect fulfilment of the laws of aggregation in the earth of alumina, and it is therefore beautiful; more beautiful than clay, or any other of the conditions of that earth. But a square leaf on any tree would be ugly, being a violation of the laws of growth in trees,\* and we ought to feel it so.

Now then, I proceed to argue in this manner from what we see in the woods and fields around us; that as they are evidently meant for our delight, and as we always feel them to be beautiful, we may assume that the forms into which their leaves are cast are indeed types of beauty, not of extreme or perfect, but average beauty. And finding that they invariably terminate more or less in pointed arches, and are not square-headed, I assert the pointed arch to be one of the forms most fitted for perpetual contemplation by the human mind; that it is one of those which never weary, however often repeated; and that therefore, being both the strongest in structure, and a beautiful form (while the square head is both weak in structure, and an ugly form,) we are unwise ever to build in any other.

Here, however, I must anticipate another objection. It may be asked why we are to build only the tops of the windows pointed,—why not follow the leaves, and point them at the bottom also?

For this simple reason, that, while in architecture you are continually called upon to do what may be *unnecessary*

\* I am at present aware only of one tree, the tulip tree, which has an exceptional form, and which, I doubt not, every one will admit, loses much beauty in consequence. All other leaves, as far as I know, have the round or pointed arch in the form of the extremities of their foils. •

for the sake of beauty, you are never called upon to do what is *inconvenient* for the sake of beauty. You want the level window sill to lean upon, or to allow the window to open on a balcony; the eye and the common sense of the beholder require this necessity to be met before any laws of beauty are thought of; and besides this, there is in the sill no necessity for the pointed arch as a bearing form; on the contrary, it would give an idea of weak support for the sides of the window, and therefore is at once rejected; only I beg of you particularly to observe that the level sill, although useful, and therefore admitted, does not therefore become beautiful; the eye does not like it so well as the top of the window, nor does the sculptor like to attract the eye to it; his richest mouldings, traceries, and sculptures are all reserved for the top of the window, they are sparingly granted to its horizontal base. And farther, observe, that when neither the convenience of the sill, nor the support of the structure, are any more of moment, as in small windows and traceries, you instantly *have* the point given to the bottom of the window. Do you recollect the west window of your own Dunblane Abbey? If you look in any common guide-book, you will find it pointed out as peculiarly beautiful,—it is acknowledged to be beautiful by the most careless observer. And why beautiful? Look at it (Fig. 19). Simply because in its great contours it has the form of a forest leaf, and because in its decoration it has used nothing but forest leaves. The sharp and expressive moulding which surrounds it is a very interesting example of one used to an enormous extent by the builders of the early English Gothic, usually in the form seen in Fig. 14 above, composed of clusters of four sharp leaves each, originally produced by sculpturing the sides of a four-sided pyramid, and afterwards brought more or less into a true image of leaves, but deriving all its beauty from the botanical form. In the present instance only two leaves are set in each cluster; and the architect has been determined that the naturalism should be perfect. For he was no common man who designed that cathedral of Dunblane. I know not anything so perfect in its simplicity, and so beautiful, as far as it reaches, in all the Gothic with which I am acquainted. And just in proportion to his power of mind that man was content to work under Nature's teaching; and instead of putting a merely formal dogtooth, as every-

body else did at the time, he went down to the woody bank of the sweet river beneath the rocks on which he was building, and he took up a few of the fallen leaves that

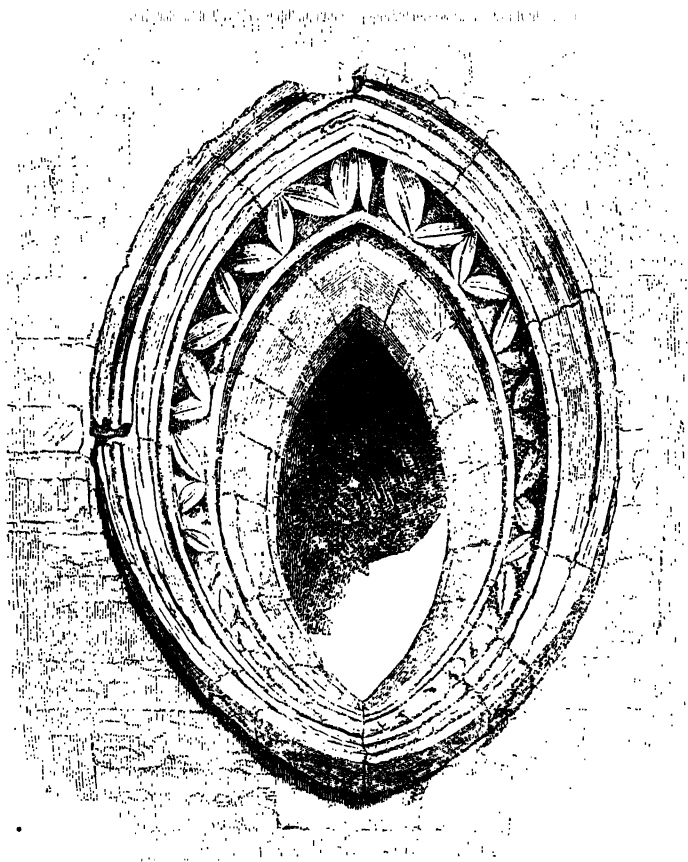


FIG. 19.

lay by it, and he set them in his arch, side by side, for ever. And, look—that he might show you he had done this,—he has made them all of different sizes, just as they lay; and that you might not by any chance miss noticing the variety, he has put a great broad one at the top, and then

a little one turned the wrong way, next to it, so that you must be blind indeed if you do not understand his meaning. And the healthy change and playfulness of this just does in the stonework what it does on the tree boughs, and is a perpetual refreshment and invigoration; so that, however long you gaze at this simple ornament—and none can be simpler, a village mason could carve it all round the window in a few hours—you are never weary of it, it seems always new.

It is true that oval windows of this form are comparatively rare in Gothic work, but, as you well know, circular or wheel windows are used constantly, and in most traceries the apertures are curved and pointed as much at the bottom as the top. So that I believe you will now allow me to proceed upon the assumption, that the pointed arch is indeed the best form into which the head either of door or window can be thrown, considered as a means of sustaining weight above it. How these pointed arches ought to be grouped and decorated, I shall endeavour to show you in my next lecture. Meantime I must beg of you to consider farther some of the general points connected with the structure of the roof.

I am sure that all of you must readily acknowledge the charm which is imparted to any landscape by the presence of cottages; and you must over and over again have paused at the wicket gate of some cottage garden, delighted by the simple beauty of the honeysuckle porch and latticed window. Has it ever occurred to you to ask the question, what effect the cottage would have upon your feelings if it had *no roof*? no visible roof, I mean;—if instead of the thatched slope, in which the little upper windows are buried deep, as in a nest of straw—or the rough shelter of its mountain shales—or warm colouring of russet tiles—there were nothing but a flat leaden top to it, making it look like a large packing-case with windows in it? I don't think the rarity of such a sight would make you feel it to be beautiful; on the contrary, if you think over the matter you will find that you actually do owe, and ought to owe, a great part of your pleasure in all cottage scenery, and in all the inexhaustible imagery of literature which is founded upon it, to the conspicuousness of the cottage roof—to the subordination of the cottage itself to its covering, which leaves, in nine cases out of ten, really more roof than anything else. It is, indeed, not so much the whitewashed walls—nor the

flowery garden—nor the rude fragments of stones set for steps at the door—nor any other picturesqueness of the building which interest you, so much as the grey bank of its heavy eaves, deep-cushioned with green moss and golden stonecrop. And there is a profound, yet evident, reason for this feeling. The very soul of the cottage—the essence and meaning of it—are in its roof; it is that, mainly, wherein consists its shelter; that, wherein it differs most completely from a cleft in rocks or power in woods. It is in its thick impenetrable coverlid of close thatch that its whole heart and hospitality are concentrated. Consider the difference, in sound, of the expressions “beneath my roof” and “within my walls,”—consider whether you would be best sheltered, in a shed, with a stout roof sustained on corner posts, or in an enclosure of four walls without a roof at all,—and you will quickly see how important a part of the cottage the roof must always be to the mind as well as to the eye, and how, from seeing it, the greatest part of our pleasure must continually arise.

Now, do you suppose that which is so all-important in a cottage, can be of small importance in your own dwelling-house? Do you think that by any splendour of architecture—any height of storeys—you can atone to the mind for the loss of the aspect of the roof? It is vain to say you take the roof for granted. You may as well say you take a man's kindness for granted, though he neither looks nor speaks kindly. You may know him to be kind in reality, but you will not like him so well as if he spoke and looked kindly also. And whatever external splendour you may give your houses, you will always feel there is something wanting, unless you see their roofs plainly. And this especially in the north. In southern architecture the roof is of far less importance; but here the soul of domestic building is in the largeness and conspicuousness of the protection against the ponderous snow and driving sleet. You may make the façade of the square pile, if the roof be not seen, as handsome as you please,—you may cover it with decoration,—but there will always be a heartlessness about it, which you will not know how to conquer; above all, a perpetual difficulty in finishing the wall at top, which will require all kinds of strange inventions in parapets and pinnacles for its decoration, and yet will never look right.

Now, I need not tell you that, as it is desirable, for the



sake of the effect upon the mind, that the roof should be visible, so the best and most natural form of roof in the north is that which will render it *most* visible, namely, the steep gable: the best and most natural, I say, because this form not only throws off snow and rain most completely, and dries fastest, but obtains the greatest interior space within walls of a given height, removes the heat of the sun most effectually from the upper rooms, and affords most space for ventilation.

You have then, observe, two great principles, as far as northern architecture is concerned; first, that the pointed arch is to be the means by which the weight of the wall or roof is to be sustained; secondly, that the steep gable is the form most proper for the roof itself. And now observe this most interesting fact, that all the loveliest Gothic architecture in the world is based on the group of lines composed of the pointed arch and the gable. If you look at the beautiful apse of Amiens Cathedral—a work justly celebrated over all Europe—you will find it formed merely of a series of windows surmounted by pure gables of open work. If you look at the transept porches of Rouen, or at the great and celebrated porch of the cathedral at Rheims, or at that of Strashourg, Bayeux, Amiens, or Peterborough, still you will see that these lovely compositions are nothing more than richly decorated forms of gable over pointed arch. But more than this, you must be all well aware how fond our best architectural artists are of the street effects of foreign cities; and even those now present who have not personally visited any of the continental towns must remember, I should think, some of the many interesting drawings by Mr. Prout, Mr. Nash, and other excellent draughtsmen, which have for many years adorned our exhibitions. Now, the principal charm of all those continental street effects is dependent on the houses having high-pitched gable roofs. In the Netherlands, and Northern France, where the material for building is brick or stone, the fronts of the stone gables are raised above the roofs, and you have magnificent and grotesque ranges of steps or curves decorated with various ornaments, succeeding one another in endless perspective along the streets of Antwerp, Ghent, or Brussels. In Picardy and Normandy, again, and many towns of Germany, where the material for building is principally wood, the roof is made to project over the gables,

fringed with a beautifully-carved cornice, and casting a broad shadow down the house front. This is principally seen at Abbeville, Rouen, Lisieux, and others of the older towns of France. But, in all cases, the effect of the whole street depends on the prominence of the gables; not only of the fronts towards the streets, but of the sides also, set with small garret or dormer windows, each of the most fantastic and beautiful form, and crowned with a little spire or pinnacle. Wherever there is a little winding stair, or projecting bow window, or any other irregularity of form, the steep ridges shoot into turrets and small spires, as in Fig. 20,\* each in its turn crowned by a fantastic ornament, covered with curiously shaped slates or shingles, or crested with long fringes of rich ironwork, so that, seen from above and from a distance, the intricate grouping of the roofs of a French city is

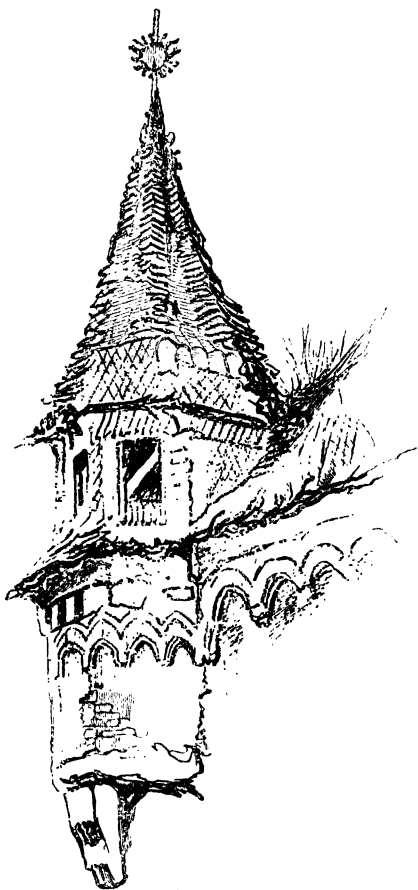


FIG. 20.

no less interesting than its actual streets; and in the streets themselves, the masses of broad shadow which the roofs form against the sky, are a most important background • to the bright and sculptured surfaces of the walls.

\* This figure is copied from Prout.

Finally. I need not remind you of the effect upon the northern mind which has always been produced by the heaven-pointing spire, nor of the theory which has been founded upon it of the general meaning of Gothic architecture as expressive of religious aspiration. In a few minutes, you may ascertain the exact value of that theory, and the degree in which it is true.

The first tower of which we hear as built upon the earth, was certainly built in a species of aspiration; but I do not suppose that any one here will think it was a religious one. "Go to now. Let us build a tower whose top may reach unto heaven." From that day to this, whenever men have become skilful architects at all, there has been a tendency in them to build high; not in any religious feeling, but in mere exuberance of spirit and power—as they dance or sing—with a certain mingling of vanity—like the feeling in which a child builds a tower of cards; and, in nobler instances, with also a strong sense of, and delight in the majesty, height, and strength of the building itself, such as we have in that of a lofty tree or a peaked mountain. Add to this instinct the frequent necessity of points of elevation for watch-towers, or of points of offence, as in towers built on the ramparts of cities, and, finally, the need of elevations for the transmission of sound, as in the Turkish minaret and Christian belfry, and you have, I think, a sufficient explanation of the tower-building of the world in general. Look through your Bibles only, and collect the various expressions with reference to tower-building there, and you will have a very complete idea of the spirit in which it is for the most part undertaken. You begin with that of Babel; then you remember Gideon beating down the Tower of Penuel, in order more completely to humble the pride of the men of the city; you remember the defence of the Tower of Shechem against Abimelech, and the death of Abimelech by the casting of a stone from it by a woman's hand; you recollect the husbandman building a tower in his vineyard, and the beautiful expressions in Solomon's Song,—“The tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus”; “I am a wall, and my breasts like towers”;—you recollect the Psalmist's expressions of love and delight, “Go ye round about Jerusalem; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following.” You see

in all these cases how completely the tower is a subject of human pride, or delight, or defence, not in anywise associated with religious sentiment; the towers of Jerusalem being named in the same sentence, not with her temple, but with her bulwarks and palaces. And thus, when the tower is in reality connected with a place of worship, it was generally done to add to its magnificence, but not to add to its religious expression. And over the whole of the world, you have various species of elevated buildings, the Egyptian pyramid, the Indian and Chinese pagoda, the Turkish minaret, and the Christian belfry,—all of them raised either to make a show from a distance, or to cry from, or swing bells in, or hang them round, or for some other very human reason. Thus, when the good people of Beauvais were building their cathedral, that of Amiens, then just completed, had excited the admiration of all France, and the people of Beauvais, in their jealousy and determination to beat the people of Amiens, set to work to build a tower to their own cathedral as high as they possibly could. They built it so high that it tumbled down, and they were never able to finish their cathedral at all—it stands a wreck to this day. But you will not, I should think, imagine this to have been done in heavenward aspiration. Mind, however, I don't blame the people of Beauvais, except for their bad building. I think their desire to beat the citizens of Amiens a most amiable weakness, and only wish I could see the citizens of Edinburgh and Glasgow inflamed with the same emulation, building Gothic towers \* instead of manufactory chimneys; only do not confound a feeling which, though healthy and right, may be nearly analagous to that in which you play a cricket-match, with any feeling allied to your hope of heaven.

Such being the state of the case with respect to tower-building in general, let me follow for a few minutes the changes which occur in the towers of northern and southern architects.

Many of us are familiar with the ordinary form of the Italian bell-tower or campanile. From the eighth century to the thirteenth there was little change in that

\* I did not, at the time of the delivery of these lectures, know how many Gothic towers the worthy Glaswegians *have* lately built: that of St. Peter's, in particular, being a most meritorious effort.

form: \* four-square, rising high and without tapering into the air, storey above storey, they stood like giants in the quiet fields beside the piles of the basilica or the Lombardic church, in this form (Fig. 21), tiled at the top in a flat gable, with open arches below, and fewer and fewer arches on each

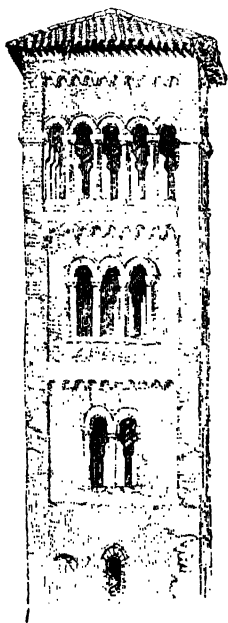


FIG. 21.

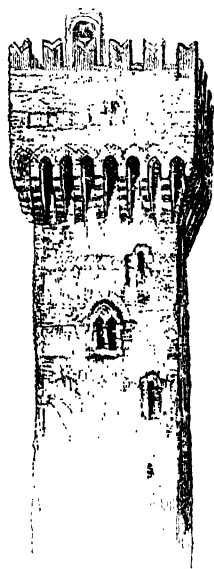


FIG. 22.

inferior storey, down to the bottom. It is worth while noting the difference in form between these and the towers built for military service. The latter were built as in Fig. 22, projecting vigorously at the top over a series of brackets or machicolations, with very small windows, and no decoration below. Such towers as these were attached to every important palace in the cities of Italy, and stood in great circles—troops of towers—around their external walls: their ruins still frown along the crests of every

\* There is a good abstract of the forms of the Italian campanile, by Mr. Papworth, in the *Journal of the Archæological Institute*, March 1850.

promontory of the Apennines, and are seen from far away in the great Lombardic plain, from distances of half-a-day's journey, dark against the amber sky of the horizon. These are of course now built no more, the changed methods of modern warfare having cast them into entire disuse; but the belfry or campanile has had a very different influence on European architecture. Its form in the plains of Italy and South France being that just shown you, the moment we enter the valleys of the Alps, where there is snow to be sustained, we find its form of roof altered by the substitution of a steep gable for a flat one.\* There are probably few in the room who have not been in some parts of South Switzerland, and who do not remember the beautiful effect of the grey mountain churches, many of them hardly changed since the tenth and eleventh centuries, whose pointed towers stand up through the green level of the vines, or crown the jutting rocks that border the valley. From this form to the true spire, the change is slight, and consists in little more than various decoration, generally in putting small pinnacles at the angles, and piercing the central pyramid with traceried windows, sometimes, as at Fribourg and Burgos, throwing it into tracery altogether: but to do this is invariably the sign of a vicious style, as it takes away from the spire its character of a true roof, and turns it nearly into an ornamental excrescence. At Antwerp and Brussels, the celebrated towers (one, observe, ecclesiastical, being the tower of the cathedral, and the other secular) are formed by successions of diminishing towers, set one above the other, and each supported by buttresses thrown to the angles of the one beneath. At the English cathedrals of Lichfield and Salisbury, the spire is seen in great purity, only decorated by sculpture; but I am aware of no example so striking in its entire simplicity as that of the towers of the cathedral of Coutances in Normandy. There is a dispute between French and English antiquaries as to the date of the building, the English being unwilling to admit its complete priority to all their own Gothic. I have no doubt of this priority myself; and I hope that the time will soon come when men will cease to confound vanity with patriotism, and will think the honour of their nation more advanced by their own sincerity and courtesy,

\* \* The form establishes itself afterwards in the plains, in sympathy with other Gothic conditions, as in the campanile of St. Mark's at Venice.

than by claims, however learnedly contested, to the invention of pinnacles and arches. I believe the French nation was, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the greatest in the world; and that the French not only invented Gothic architecture, but carried it to a perfection which no other nation has approached, then or since: but, however this may be, there can be no doubt that the towers of Coutances, if not the earliest, are among the very earliest examples of the fully-developed spire. I have drawn one of them carefully for you (Fig. 23), and you will see immediately that they are literally domestic roofs, with garret windows, executed on a large scale, and in stone. Their only ornament is a kind of scaly mail, which is nothing more than the copying in stone of the common wooden shingles of the house-roof; and their security is provided for by strong gabled dormer windows, of massy masonry, which, though supported on detached shafts, have weight enough completely to balance the lateral thrusts of the spires. Nothing can surpass the boldness or the simplicity of the plan; and yet, in spite of this simplicity, the clear detaching of the shafts from the slope of the spire, and their great height, strengthened by rude cross-bars of stone, carried back to the wall behind, occasions so great a complexity and play of cast shadows, that I remember no architectural composition of which the aspect is so completely varied at different hours of the day.\* But the main thing I wish you to observe is, the complete *domesticity* of the work; the evident treatment of the church spire merely as a magnified house-roof; and the proof herein of the great truth of which I have been endeavouring to persuade you, that all good architecture rises out of good and simple domestic work; and that, therefore, before you attempt to build great churches and palaces, you must build good house doors and garret windows. Nor is the spire the only ecclesiastical form deducible from domestic architecture. The spires of France and Germany are associated with other towers, even simpler and more straightforward in confession of their nature, in which, though the walls of the tower are covered with sculpture, there is an ordinary ridged gable roof on the top. The finest example I know of this kind of tower, is that on the north-west angle of Rouen Cathedral (Fig. 24); but they occur in

\* The sketch was made about ten o'clock on a September morning.

multitudes in the older towns of Germany; and the backgrounds of Albert Durer are full of them, and owe to them a great part of their interest: all these great and magnifi-

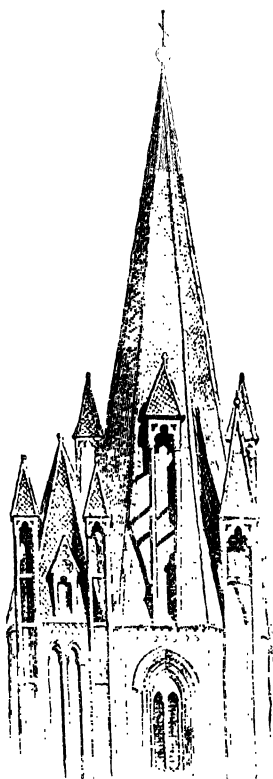


FIG. 23.

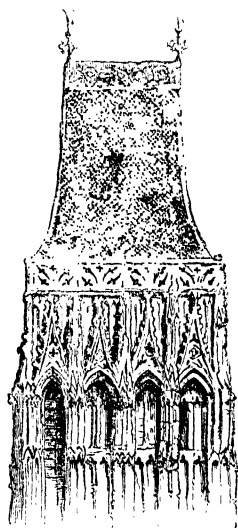


FIG. 24.

cent masses of architecture being repeated on a smaller scale by the little turret roofs and pinnacles of every house in the town; and the whole system of them being expressive, not by any means of religious feeling,\* but merely

\* Among the various modes in which the architects, against whose practice my writings are directed, have endeavoured to oppose them, no charge has been made more frequently than that of their self-contradiction; the fact being, that there are few people in the world who are capable of seeing the two sides of any subject, or of conceiving how the statements



of joyfulness and exhilaration of spirit in the inhabitants of such cities, leading them to throw their roofs high into the sky, and therefore giving to the style of architecture with which these grotesque roofs are associated, a certain charm like that of cheerfulness in a human face; besides a power of interesting the beholder which is testified, not only by the artist in his constant search after such forms as the elements of his landscape, but by every phrase of our language and literature bearing on such topics. Have not these words, Pinnacle, Turret, Belfry, Spire, Tower, a pleasant sound in all your ears? I do not speak of your scenery, I do not ask you how much you feel that it owes to the grey battlements that frown through the woods of Craigmillar, to the pointed turrets that flank the front of Holyrood, or to the massy keeps of your Crichtoun, and Borthwick and other border towers. But look merely through your poetry and romances; take away out of your border ballads the word *tower* wherever it occurs, and the ideas connected with it, and what will become of the ballads? See how Sir Walter Scott cannot even get through

of its opposite aspects can possibly be reconcilable. For instance, in a recent review, though for the most part both fair and intelligent, it is remarked, on this very subject of the domestic origin of the northern Gothic, that "Mr. Ruskin is evidently possessed by a fixed idea, that the Venetian architects were devout men. and that their devotion was expressed in their buildings; while he will not allow our own cathedrals to have been built by any but worldly men, who had no thoughts of heaven, but only vague ideas of keeping out of hell, by erecting costly places of worship." If this writer had compared the two passages with the care which such a subject necessarily demands, he would have found that I was not opposing Venetian to English piety; but that in the one case I was speaking of the spirit manifested in the entire architecture of the nation, and in the other of occasional efforts of superstition as distinguished from that spirit; and, farther, that in the one case, I was speaking of decorative features, which are ordinarily the results of feeling, in the other, of structural features, which are ordinarily the results of necessity or convenience. Thus it is rational and just that we should attribute the decoration of the arches of St. Mark's with scriptural mosaics to a religious sentiment; but it would be a strange absurdity to regard as an effort of piety the invention of the form of the arch itself, of which one of the earliest and most perfect instances is in the Cloaca Maxima. And thus in the case of spires and towers, it is just to ascribe to the devotion of their designers that dignity which was bestowed upon forms derived from the simplest domestic buildings; but it is ridiculous to attribute any great refinement of religious feeling, or height of religious aspiration, to those who furnished the funds for the erection of the loveliest tower in North France, by paying for permission to eat butter in Lent.

a description of Highland scenery without help from the idea:—

“Each purple peak, each flinty *spire*,  
Was bathed in floods of living fire.”

Take away from Scott's romances the word and idea *turret*, and see how much you would lose. Suppose, for instance, when young Osbaldistone is leaving Osbaldistone Hall, instead of saying “The old clock struck two from a *turret* adjoining my bedchamber,” he had said, “The old clock struck two from the landing at the top of the stair,” what would become of the passage? And can you really suppose that what has so much power over you in words has no power over you in reality? Do you think there is any group of words which would thus interest you, when the things expressed by them are uninteresting? For instance, you know that, for an immense time back, all your public buildings have been built with a row of pillars supporting a triangular thing called a pediment. You see this form every day in your banks and clubhouses, and churches and chapels; you are told that it is the perfection of architectural beauty; and yet suppose Sir Walter Scott, instead of writing, “Each purple peak, each flinty *spire*,” had written, “Each purple peak, each flinty ‘pediment.’” \* Would you have thought the poem improved? And if not, why would it be spoiled? Simply because the idea is no longer of any value to you; the thing spoken of is a nonentity. These pediments, and stylobates, and architraves never excited a single pleasureable feeling in you—never will, to the end of time. They are evermore dead, lifeless, and useless, in art as in poetry, and though you built as many of them as there are slates on your house—

\* It has been objected to this comparison that the form of the pediment does not properly represent that of the rocks of the Trossachs. The objection is utterly futile, for there is not a single spire or pinnacle from one end of the Trossachs to the other. All their rocks are heavily rounded, and the introduction of the word “*spire*” is a piece of inaccuracy in description, ventured *merely for the sake of the Gothic image*. Farther: it has been said that if I had substituted the word “*gable*,” it would have spoiled the line just as much as the word “*pediment*,” though “*gable*” is a Gothic word. Of course it would; but why? Because “*gable*” is a term of vulgar domestic architecture, and therefore destructive of the tone of the heroic description; whereas “*pediment*” and “*spire*” are precisely correlative terms, being each the crowning feature in ecclesiastical edifices, and the comparison of their effects in the verse is therefore absolutely accurate, logical, and just.

roofs, you will never care for them. They will only remain to later ages as monuments of the patience and pliability with which the people of the nineteenth century sacrificed their feelings to fashions, and their intellects to forms. But on the other hand, that strange and thrilling interest with which such words strike you as are in any wise connected with Gothic architecture—as for instance, Vault, Arch, Spire, Pinnacle, Battlement, Barbican, Porch, and myriads of such others, words everlastingly poetical and powerful whenever they occur,—is a most true and certain index that the things themselves are delightful to you, and will ever continue to be so. Believe me, you do indeed love these things, so far as you care about art at all, so far as you are not ashamed to confess what you feel about them. In your public capacities, as bank directors, and charity overseers, and administrators of this and that other undertaking or institution, you cannot express your feelings at all. You form committees to decide upon the style of the new building, and as you have never been in the habit of trusting to your own taste in such matters, you inquire who is the most celebrated, that is to say, the most employed, architect of the day. And you send for the great Mr. Blank, and the Great Blank sends you a plan of a great long marble box with half-a-dozen pillars at one end of it, and the same at the other; and you look at the Great Blank's great plan in a grave manner, and you daresay it will be very handsome; and you ask the Great Blank what sort of a blank cheque must be filled up before the great plan can be realised; and you subscribe in a generous "burst of confidence" whatever is wanted; and when it is all done, and the great white marble box is set up in your streets, you contemplate it, not knowing what to make of it exactly, but hoping it is all right; and then there is a dinner given to the Great Blank, and the morning Papers say that the new and handsome building, erected by the great Mr. Blank, is one of Mr. Blank's happiest efforts, and reflects the greatest credit upon the intelligent inhabitants of the city of so-and-so; and the building keeps the rain out as well as another, and you remain in a placid state of impoverished satisfaction therewith; but as for having any real pleasure out of it, you never hoped for such a thing. If you really make up a party of pleasure, and get rid of the forms and fashion of public propriety for an hour or two,

where do you go for it? Where do you go to eat strawberries and cream? To Roslin Chapel, I believe; not to the portico of the last-built institution. What do you see your children doing, obeying their own natural and true instincts? What are your daughters drawing upon their card-board screens as soon as they can use a pencil? Not Parthenon fronts I think, but the ruins of Melrose Abbey or Linlithgow Palace, or Lochleven Castle, their own pure Scotch hearts leading them straight to the right things, in spite of all that they are told to the contrary. You perhaps call this romantic, and youthful, and foolish. I am pressed for time now, and I cannot ask you to consider the meaning of the word "Romance." I will do that, if you please, in next lecture, for it is a word of greater weight and authority than we commonly believe. In the meantime, I will endeavour, lastly, to show you, not the romantic, but the plain and practical conclusions which should follow from the facts I have laid before you.

I have endeavoured briefly to point out to you the propriety and naturalness of the two great Gothic forms, the pointed arch and gable roof. I wish now to tell you in what way they ought to be introduced into modern domestic architecture.

You will all admit that there is neither romance nor comfort in waiting at your own or at any one else's door on a windy and rainy day, till the servant comes from the end of the house to open it. You all know the critical nature of that opening—the drift of wind into the passage, the impossibility of putting down the umbrella at the proper moment without getting a cupful of water dropped down the back of your neck from the top of the doorway; and you know how little these inconveniences are abated by the common Greek portico at the top of the steps. You know how the east winds blow through those unlucky couples of pillars, which are all that your architects find consistent with due observance of the Doric order. Then, away with these absurdities; and the next house you build, insist upon having the pure old Gothic porch, walled in on both sides, with its pointed arch entrance and gable roof above. Under that, you can put down your umbrella at your leisure, and, if you will, stop a moment to talk with your friend as you give him the parting shake of the hand. And if now and then a wayfarer found a moment's rest on

a stone seat on each side of it, I believe you would find the insides of your houses not one whit the less comfortable; and, if you answer me, that were such refuges built in the open streets, they would become mere nests of filthy vagrants, I reply that I do not despair of such a change in the administration of the poor laws of this country as shall no longer leave any of our fellow-creatures in a state in which they would pollute the steps of our houses by resting upon them for a night. But if not, the command to all of us is strict and straight, "When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to *thy house*." \* Not to the workhouse, observe, but to *thy house*: and I say it would be better a thousandfold, that our doors should be beset by the poor day by day, than that it should be written of any one of us, "They reap every one his corn in the field, and they gather the vintage of the wicked. They cause the naked to lodge without shelter, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock, for want of a shelter." †

This, then, is the first use to which your pointed arches and gable roofs are to be put. The second is of more personal pleasurableness. You surely must all of you feel and admit the delightfulness of a bow window; I can hardly fancy a room can be perfect without one. Now you have nothing to do but to resolve that every one of your principal rooms shall have a bow window, either large or small. Sustain the projection of it on a bracket, crown it above with a little peaked roof, and give a massy piece of stone sculpture to the pointed arch in each of its casements, and you will have as inexhaustible a source of quaint richness in your street architecture as of additional comfort and delight in the interiors of your rooms.

Thirdly; as respects windows which do not project. You will find that the proposal to build them with pointed arches is met by an objection on the part of your architects, that you cannot fit them with comfortable sashes. I beg leave to tell you that such an objection is utterly futile and ridiculous. I have lived for months in Gothic palaces, with pointed windows of the most complicated forms, fitted with modern sashes; and with the most perfect comfort. But granting that the objection were a true one

—and I suppose it is true to just this extent, that it may cost some few shillings more per window in the first instance to set the fittings to a pointed arch than to a square one—there is not the smallest necessity for the *aperture* of the window being of the pointed shape. Make the uppermost or bearing arch pointed only, and make the top of the window square, filling the interval with a stone shield, and you may have a perfect school of architecture, not only consistent with, but eminently conducive to, every comfort of your daily life. The window in Oakham Castle (Fig. 14) is an example of such a form as actually employed in the thirteenth century; and I shall have to notice another in the course of next lecture. Meanwhile, I have but one word to say in conclusion. Whatever has been advanced in the course of this evening, has rested on the assumption that all architecture was to be of brick and stone; and may meet with some hesitation in its acceptance, on account of the probable use of iron, glass, and such other materials in our future edifices. I cannot now enter into any statement of the possible uses of iron or glass, but I will give you one reason, which I think will weigh strongly with most here, why it is not likely that they will ever become important elements in architectural effect. I know that I am speaking to a company of philosophers, but you are not philosophers of the kind who suppose that the Bible is a superannuated book; neither are you of those who think the Bible is dishonoured by being referred to for judgment in small matters. The very divinity of the Book seems to me, on the contrary, to justify us in referring *every* thing to it, with respect to which any conclusion can be gathered from its pages. Assuming then that the Bible is neither superannuated now, nor ever likely to be so, it will follow that the illustrations which the Bible employs are likely to be *clear and intelligible illustrations* to the end of time. I do not mean that everything spoken of in the Bible histories must continue to endure for all time, but that the things which the Bible uses for illustration of eternal truths are likely to remain eternally intelligible illustrations. Now, I find that iron architecture is indeed spoken of in the Bible. You know how it is said to Jeremiah, “Behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land.” But I do not find that iron building is ever alluded

to as likely to become *familiar* to the minds of men; but, on the contrary, that an architecture of carved stone is continually employed as a source of the most important illustrations. A simple instance must occur to all of you at once. The force of the image of the Corner Stone, as used throughout Scripture, would completely be lost, if the Christian and civilised world were ever extensively to employ any other material than earth and rock in their domestic buildings: I firmly believe that they never will; but that as the laws of beauty are more perfectly established, we shall be content still to build as our forefathers built, and still to receive the same great lessons which such building is calculated to convey; of which one is indeed never to be forgotten. Among the questions respecting towers which were laid before you to-night, one has been omitted: "What man is there of you intending to build a tower, that sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" I have pressed upon you, this evening, the building of domestic towers. You may think it right to dismiss the subject at once from your thoughts; but let us not do so, without considering, each of us, how far *that* tower has been built, and how truly its cost has been counted.

## LECTURE II

BEFORE proceeding to the principal subject of this evening, I wish to anticipate one or two objections which may arise in your minds to what I must lay before you. It may perhaps have been felt by you last evening, that some things I proposed to you were either romantic or Utopian. Let us think for a few moments what romance and Utopianism mean.

First, romance. In consequence of the many absurd fictions which long formed the elements of romance writing, the word romance is sometimes taken as synonymous with falsehood. Thus the French talk of *Des Romans*, and thus the English use the word Romancing.

But in this sense we had much better use the word falsehood at once. It is far plainer and clearer. And if in this sense I put anything romantic before you, pray pay no attention to it, or to me.

In the second place. Because young people are particularly apt to indulge in reverie, and imaginative pleasures, and to neglect their plain and practical duties, the word romantic has come to signify weak, foolish, speculative, unpractical, unprincipled. In all these cases it would be much better to say weak, foolish, unpractical, unprincipled. The words are clearer. If in this sense, also, I put anything romantic before you, pray pay no attention to me.

But in the third and last place. The real and proper use of the word romantic is simply to characterise an improbable or unaccustomed degree of beauty, sublimity, or virtue. For instance, in matters of history, is not the Retreat of the Ten Thousand romantic? Is not the death of Leonidas? of the Horatii? On the other hand, you find nothing romantic, though much that is monstrous, in the excesses of Tiberius or Commodus. So again, the battle of Agincourt is romantic, and of Bannockburn, simply because there was an extraordinary display of human virtue in both those battles. But there is no romance



in the battles of the last Italian campaign, in which mere feebleness and distrust were on one side, mere physical force on the other. And even in fiction, the opponents of virtue, in order to be romantic, must have sublimity mingled with their vice. It is not the knave, not the ruffian, that are romantic, but the giant and the dragon; and these, not because they are false, but because they are majestic. So again as to beauty. You feel that armour is romantic, because it is a beautiful dress, and you are not used to it. You do not feel there is anything romantic in the paint and shells of a Sandwich Islander, for these are not beautiful.

So, then, observe, this feeling which you are accustomed to despise—this secret and poetical enthusiasm in all your hearts, which, as practical men, you try to restrain—is indeed one of the holiest parts of your being. It is the instinctive delight in, and admiration for, sublimity, beauty, and virtue, unusually manifested. And so far from being a dangerous guide, it is the truest part of your being. It is even truer than your consciences. A man's conscience may be utterly perverted and led astray; but so long as the feelings of romance endure within us, they are unerring,—they are as true to what is right and lovely as the needle to the north; and all that you have to do is to add to the enthusiastic sentiment, the majestic judgment—to mingle prudence and foresight with imagination and admiration, and you have the perfect human soul. But the great evil of these days is that we try to destroy the romantic feeling, instead of bridling and directing it. Mark what Young says of the men of the world.

“They, who think nought so strong of the romance,  
So rank knight-errant, as a real friend.”

And they are right. True friendship is romantic, to the men of the world—true affection is romantic—true religion is romantic; and if you were to ask me who of all powerful and popular writers in the cause of error had wrought most harm to their race, I should hesitate in reply whether to name Voltaire, or Byron, or the last most ingenious and most venomous of the degraded philosophers of Germany, or rather Cervantes, for he cast scorn upon the holiest principles of humanity—he, of all men, most helped forward the terrible change in the soldiers of Europe, from the spirit

of Bayard to the spirit of Bonaparte,\* helped to change loyalty into license, protection into plunder, truth into treachery, chivalry into selfishness; and, since his time, the purest impulses and the noblest purposes have perhaps been oftener stayed by the devil, under the name of Quixotism, than under any other base name or false allegation.

Quixotism, or Utopianism: that is another of the devil's pet words. I believe the quiet admission which we are all of us so ready to make, that, because things have long been wrong, it is impossible they should ever be right, is one of the most fatal sources of misery and crime from which this world suffers. Whenever you hear a man dissuading you from attempting to do well, on the ground that perfection is "Utopian," beware of that man. Cast the word out of your dictionary altogether. There is no need for it. Things are either possible or impossible—you can easily determine which, in any given state of human science. If the thing is impossible, you need not trouble yourselves about it; if possible, try for it. It is very Utopian to hope for the entire doing away with drunkenness and misery out of the Canon-gate; but the Utopianism is not our business—the *work* is. It is Utopian to hope to give every child in this kingdom the knowledge of God from its youth; but the Utopianism is not our business—the *work* is.

I have delayed you by the consideration of these two words, only in the fear that they might be inaccurately applied to the plans I am going to lay before you; for, though they were Utopian, and though they were romantic, they might be none the worse for that. But they are neither. Utopian they are not; for they are merely a proposal to do again what has been done for hundreds of years by people whose wealth and power were as nothing compared to ours;—and romantic they are not, in the sense of self-sacrificing or eminently virtuous, for they are merely the proposal to each of you that he should live in a handsomer house than he does at present, by substituting a cheap mode of ornamentation for a costly one. You perhaps fancied that architectural beauty was a very costly thing. Far from it. It is architectural ugliness that is

\* I mean no scandal against the *present* emperor of the French, whose truth has, I believe, been as conspicuous in the late political negotiations as his decision and prudence have been throughout the whole course of his government. •

costly. In the modern system of architecture, decoration is immoderately expensive, because it is both wrongly placed and wrongly finished. I say first, wrongly placed. Modern architects decorate the tops of their buildings. Mediæval ones decorated the bottom.\* That makes all the difference between seeing the ornament and not seeing it. If you bought some pictures to decorate such a room as this, where would you put them? On a level with the eye, I suppose, or nearly so? Not on a level with the chandelier? If you were determined to put them up there, round the cornice, it would be better for you not to buy them at all. You would merely throw your money away. And the fact is, that your money is being thrown away continually, by wholesale; and while you are dissuaded, on the ground of expense, from building beautiful windows and beautiful doors, you are continually made to pay for ornaments at the tops of your houses, which, for all the use they are of, might as well be in the moon. For instance, there is not, on the whole, a more studied piece of domestic architecture in Edinburgh than the street in which so many of your excellent physicians live—Rutland Street. I do not know if you have observed its architecture; but if you will look at it to-morrow, you will see that a heavy and close balustrade is put all along the eaves of the houses. Your physicians are not, I suppose, in the habit of taking academic and meditative walks on the roofs of their houses; and, if not, this balustrade is altogether useless,—nor merely useless, for you will find it runs directly in front of all the garret windows, thus interfering with their light, and blocking out their view of the street. All that the parapet is meant to do, is to give some finish to the façades, and the inhabitants have thus been made to pay a large sum for a piece of mere decoration. Whether it *does* finish the façades satisfactorily, or whether the physicians resident in the street, or their patients, are in any wise edified by the succession of pear-shaped knobs of stone on their house-tops, I leave them to tell you, only do not fancy that the design, whatever its success, is an economical one.

But this is a very slight waste of money, compared to the constant habit of putting careful sculpture at the tops of

\* For farther confirmation of this statement, see the Addenda at the end of this lecture.

houses: A temple of luxury has just been built in London, for the Army and Navy Club. It cost £40,000, exclusive of purchase of ground. It has upon it an enormous quantity of sculpture, representing the gentlemen of the navy as little boys riding upon dolphins, and the gentlemen of the army—I couldn't see as what—nor can anybody; for all this sculpture is put up at the top of the house, where the gutter should be, under the cornice. I know that this was a Greek way of doing things. I can't help it: that does not make it a wise one. Greeks might be willing to pay for what they couldn't see, but Scotchmen and Englishmen shouldn't.

Not that the Greeks threw their work away as we do. As far as I know Greek buildings, their ornamentation, though often bad, is always bold enough and large enough to be visible in its place. It is not putting ornament *high* that is wrong; but it is cutting it too fine to be seen, wherever it is. This is the great modern mistake: you are actually at twice the cost which would produce an impressive ornament, to produce a contemptible one; you increase the price of your buildings by one-half, in order to mince their decoration into invisibility. Walk through your streets, and try to make out the ornaments on the upper parts of your fine buildings—(there are none at the bottoms of them). Don't do it long, or you will all come home with inflamed eyes, but you will soon discover that you can see nothing but confusion in ornaments that have cost you ten or twelve shillings a foot.

Now the Gothic builders placed their decoration on a precisely contrary principle, and on the only rational principle. All their best and most delicate work they put on the foundation of the building, close to the spectator, and on the upper parts of the walls they put ornaments large, bold, and capable of being plainly seen at the necessary distance. A single example will enable you to understand this method of adaptation perfectly. The lower part of the façade of the cathedral of Lyons, built either late in the thirteenth or early in the fourteenth century, is decorated with a series of niches, filled by statues of considerable size, which are supported upon pedestals within about eight feet of the ground. In general pedestals of this kind are supported on some projecting portion of the basement; but at Lyons, owing to other arrangements of the architecture into

which I have no time to enter, they are merely projecting tablets, or flat-bottomed brackets of stone, projecting from the wall. Each bracket is about a foot and a half square, and is shaped thus (Fig. 25), showing to the spectator, as he walks beneath, the flat bottom of each bracket, quite in the shade, but within a couple of feet of the eye, and lighted by the reflected light from the pavement. The whole of the surface of the wall round the great entrance is covered with bas-relief as a matter of course; but the architect appears

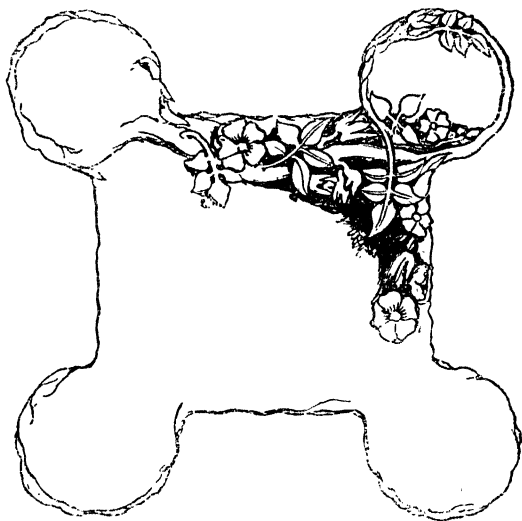


FIG. 25.

to have been jealous of the smallest space which was well within the range of sight; and the *bottom* of every bracket is decorated also—nor that slightly, but decorated with no fewer than *six figures each, besides a flower border*, in a space, as I said, *not quite a foot and a half square*. The shape of the field to be decorated being a kind of quatrefoil, as shown in Fig. 25, four small figures are placed, one in each foil, and two larger ones in the centre. I had only time, in passing through the town, to make a drawing of one of the angles of these pedestals; that sketch I have enlarged, in order that you may have some idea of the character of the sculp-

ture. Here is the enlargement of it (Fig. 26). Now observe, this is *one* of the angles of the bottom of a pedestal, not two feet broad, on the outside of a Gothic building; it contains only one of the four little figures which form those angles; and it shows you the head only of one of the larger

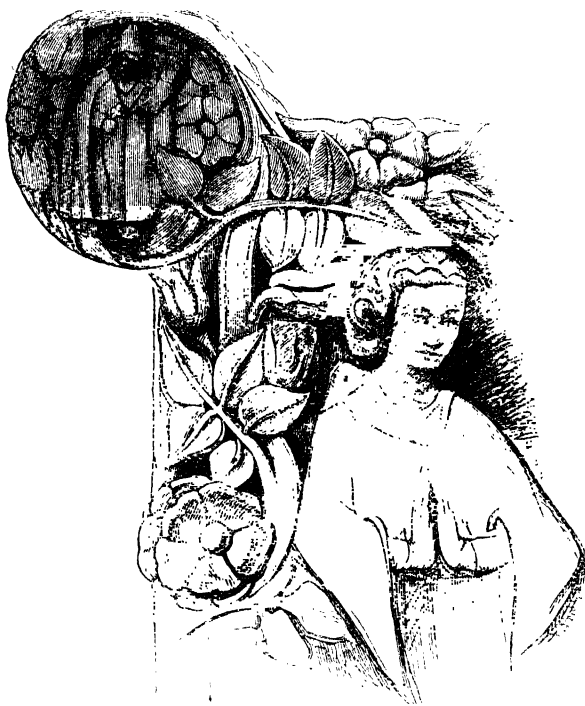


FIG. 26.

figures in the centre. Yet just observe how much design, how much wonderful composition, there is in this mere fragment of a building of the great times; a fragment, literally no larger than a schoolboy could strike off in wantonness with a stick: and yet I cannot tell you how much care has been spent,—not so much on the execution, for it does not take much trouble to execute well on so small a scale—but on the design, of this minute fragment.

You see it is composed of a branch of wild roses, which switches round at the angle, embracing the minute figure of the bishop, and terminates in a spray reaching nearly to the head of the large figure. You will observe how beautifully that figure is thus *pointed to* by the spray of rose, and how all the leaves around it in the same manner are subservient to the grace of its action. Look, if I hide one line, or one rosebud, how the whole is injured, and how much there is to study in the detail of it. Look at this

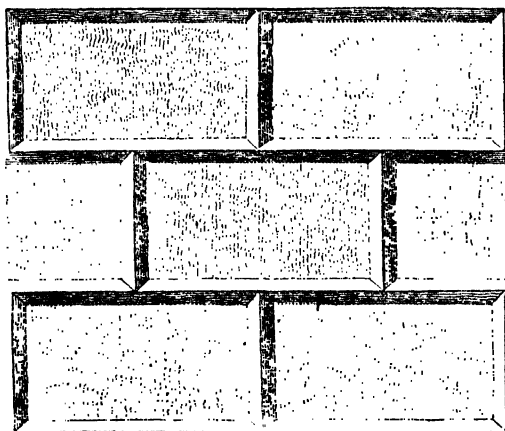


FIG. 27.

little diamond crown, with a lock of the hair escaping from beneath it; and at the beautiful way in which the tiny leaf at *a* is set in the angle to prevent its harshness; and having examined this well, consider what a treasure of thought there is in a cathedral front, a hundred feet wide, every inch of which is wrought with sculpture like this! And every front of our thirteenth-century cathedrals is inwrought with sculpture of this quality! And yet you quietly allow yourselves to be told that the men who thus wrought were barbarians, and that your architects are wiser and better in covering your walls with sculpture of this kind (Fig. 27).

Walk round your Edinburgh buildings and look, at the height of your eye, what you will get from them. Nothing

but square-cut stone—square-cut stone—a wilderness of square-cut stone for ever and for ever; so that your houses look like prisons, and truly are so; for the worst feature of Greek architecture is, indeed, not its costliness, but its tyranny. These square stones are not prisons of the body, but graves of the soul; for the very men who could do sculpture like this of Lyons for you are here! still here, in your despised workmen: the race has not degenerated; it is you who have bound them down, and buried them beneath your Greek stones. There would be a resurrection of them, as of renewed souls, if you would only lift the weight of these weary walls from off their hearts.\*

But I am leaving the point immediately in question, which, you will remember, was the proper adaptation of ornament to its distance from the eye. I have given you one example of Gothic ornament, meant to be seen close; now let me give you one of Gothic ornament intended to be seen far off. Here (Fig. 28) is a sketch of a niche at Amiens Cathedral, some fifty or sixty feet high on the façade, and seven or eight feet wide. Now observe, in the ornament close to the eye, you had *six figures* and a whole wreath of roses in the space of *a foot and a half square*; but in the ornament sixty feet from the eye, you have now only ten or twelve large *leaves* in a space of *eight feet square*! and note also that now there is no attempt whatsoever at the refinement of line and finish of edge which there was in the other example. The sculptor knew, that at the height of this niche, people would not attend to the delicate lines, and that the broad shadows would catch the eye instead. He has therefore left, as you see, rude square edges to his niche, and carved his leaves as massively and broadly as possible: and yet, observe how dexterously he has given you a sense of delicacy and minuteness in the work, by mingling these small leaves among the large ones. I made this sketch from a photograph, and the spot in which these leaves occurred was obscure; I have, therefore, used those of the *Oxalis acetosella*, of which the quaint form is always interesting.

And you see by this example also what I meant just now by saying, that our own ornament was not only wrongly placed, but wrongly **FINISHED**. The very qualities which

\* This subject is farther pursued in the Addenda at the end of this lecture.



*fit* this leaf-decoration for due effect upon the eye, are those which would *conduce to economy* in its execution. A more expensive ornament would be less effective; and it is the very price we pay for finishing our decorations which spoils our architecture. And the curious thing is, that

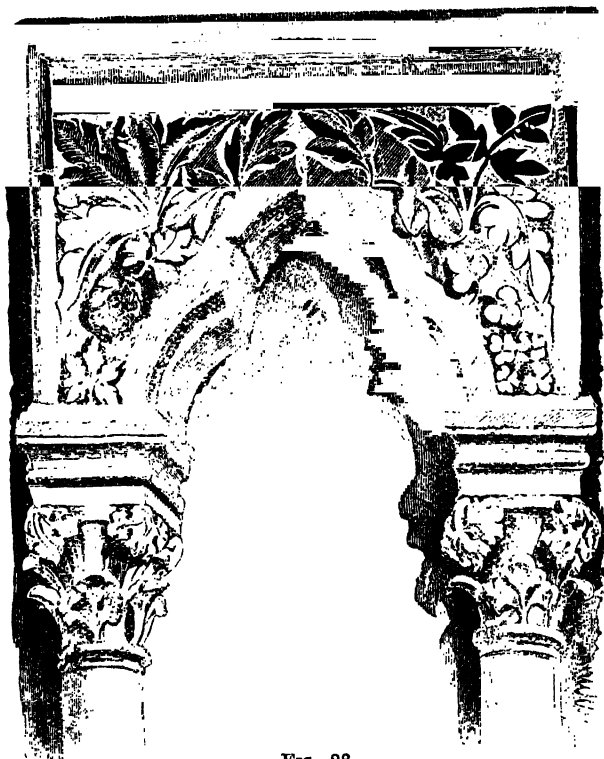


FIG. 28.

while you all appreciate, and that far too highly, what is called "the bold style" in painting, you cannot appreciate it in sculpture. You like a hurried, broad, dashing manner of execution in a water-colour drawing, though that may be seen as near as you choose, and yet you refuse to admit the nobleness of a bold, simple, and dashing stroke of the chisel in work which is to be seen forty fathoms off. Be assured

that "handling" is as great a thing in marble as in paint, and that the power of producing a masterly effect with few touches is as essential in an architect as in a draughtsman, though indeed that power is never perfectly attained except by those who possess the power of giving the highest finish when there is occasion.

But there is yet another and a weightier charge to be brought against our modern Pseudo-Greek ornamentation. It is, first, wrongly placed; secondly, wrongly finished; and, thirdly, utterly *without meaning*. Observe in these two Gothic ornaments, and in every other ornament that ever was carved in the great Gothic times, there is a definite aim at the representation of some natural object. In Fig. 26 you have an exquisite group of rose-stems, with the flowers and buds; in Fig. 28, various wild weeds, especially the *Geranium pratense*; in every case you have an approximation to a natural form, and an unceasing variety of suggestion. But how much of Nature have you in your Greek buildings? I will show you, taking for an example the best you have lately built; and, in doing so, I trust that nothing that I say will be thought to have any personal purpose, and that the architect of the building in question will forgive me; for it is just because it is a good example of the style that I think it more fair to use it for an example. If the building were a bad one of the kind, it would not be a fair instance; and I hope, therefore, that in speaking of the institution on the Mound, just in progress, I shall be understood as meaning rather a compliment to its architect than otherwise. It is not his fault that we force him to build in the Greek manner.

Now, according to the orthodox practice in modern architecture, the most delicate and minute pieces of sculpture on that building are at the very top of it, just under its gutter. You cannot see them in a dark day, and perhaps may never, to this hour, have noticed them at all. But there they are: sixty-six finished heads of lions, all exactly the same; and, therefore, I suppose, executed on some noble Greek type, too noble to allow any modest Modern to think of improving upon it. But whether executed on a Greek type or no, it is to be presumed that, as there are sixty-six of them alike, and on so important a building as that which is to contain your school of design, and which is the principal example of the Athenian style in Modern Athens, there

must be something especially admirable in them, and deserving your most attentive contemplation. In order, therefore, that you might have a fair opportunity of estimating their beauty, I was desirous of getting a sketch of a real lion's head to compare with them, and my friend Mr. Millais kindly offered to draw both the one and the other for me. You have not, however, at present, a lion in your zoological collection; and it being, as you are probably aware, the first principle of Pre-Raphaelitism, as well as essential to my object in the present instance, that no drawing should be made except from Nature itself, I was obliged to be content with a tiger's head, which, however, will answer my purpose just as well, in enabling you to compare a piece of true, faithful, and natural work with modern architectural sculpture. Here, in the first place, is Mr. Millais' drawing from the *living* beast (Fig. 29). I have not the least fear but that you will at once acknowledge its truth and feel its power. Prepare yourselves next for the Grecian sublimity of the *ideal* beast, from the cornice of your schools of design. Behold it (Fig. 30).

Now we call ourselves civilised and refined in matters of art, but I assure you it is seldom that, in the very basest and coarsest grotesques of the inferior Gothic workmen, anything so contemptible as this head can be ever found. *They* only sink into such a failure accidentally, and in a single instance; and we, in our civilisation, repeat this noble piece of work threescore and six times over, as not being able to invent anything else so good! Do not think Mr. Millais has caricatured it. It is drawn with the strictest fidelity; photograph one of the heads to-morrow, and you will find the photograph tell you the same tale. Neither imagine that this is an unusual example of modern work. Your banks and public offices are covered with ideal lions' heads in every direction, and you will find them all just as bad as this. And, farther, note that the admission of such barbarous types of sculpture is not *merely* ridiculous; it is seriously harmful to your powers of perceiving truth or beauty of any kind or at any time. Imagine the effect on the minds of your children of having such representations of a lion's head as this thrust upon them perpetually; and consider what a different effect might be produced upon them if, instead of this barren and insipid absurdity, every boss on your buildings were, according to the workman's



FIG. 29.



FIG. 30.

best ability, a faithful rendering of the form of some existing animal, so that all their walls were so many pages of natural history. And, finally, consider the difference, with respect to the mind of the workman himself, between being kept all his life carving, by sixties, and forties, and thirties, repetitions of one false and futile model,—and being sent, for every piece of work he had to execute, to make a stern and faithful study from some living creature of God.

And this last consideration enables me to press this subject on you on far higher grounds than I have done yet.

I have hitherto appealed only to your national pride, or to your common sense; but surely I should treat a Scottish audience with indignity if I appealed not finally to something higher than either of them,—to their religious principles.

You know how often it is difficult to be wisely charitable, to do good without multiplying the sources of evil. You know that to give alms is nothing unless you give thought also; and that therefore it is written, not “blessed is he that *feedeth* the poor,” but, “blessed is he that *considereth* the poor.” And you know that a little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money.

Now this charity of thought is not merely to be exercised towards the poor; it is to be exercised towards all men. There is assuredly no action of our social life, however unimportant, which by kindly thought may not be made to have a beneficial influence upon others; and it is impossible to spend the smallest sum of money, for any not absolutely necessary purpose, without a grave responsibility attaching to the manner of spending it. The object we ourselves covet may, indeed, be desirable and harmless, so far as we are concerned, but the providing us with it may, perhaps, be a very prejudicial occupation to someone else. And then it becomes instantly a moral question, whether we are to indulge ourselves or not. Whatever we wish to buy, we ought first to consider not only if the thing be fit for us, but if the manufacture of it be a wholesome and happy one; and if, on the whole, the sum we are going to spend will do as much good spent in this way as it would if spent in any other way. It may be said that we have not time to con-

sider all this before we make a purchase. But no time could be spent in a more important duty; and God never imposes a duty without giving the time to do it. Let us, however, only acknowledge the principle;—once make up your mind to allow the consideration of the *effect* of your purchases to regulate the *kind* of your purchase, and you will soon easily find grounds enough to decide upon. The plea of ignorance will never take away our responsibilities. It is written, “If thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it?”

I could press this on you at length, but I hasten to apply the principle to the subject of art. I will do so broadly at first, and then come to architecture. Enormous sums are spent annually by this country in what is called patronage of art, but in what is for the most part merely buying what strikes our fancies. True and judicious patronage there is indeed; many a work of art is bought by those who do not care for its possession, to assist the struggling artist, or relieve the unsuccessful one. But for the most part, I fear we are too much in the habit of buying simply what we like best, wholly irrespective of any good to be done, either to the artist or to the schools of the country. Now let us remember, that every farthing we spend on objects of art has influence over men's minds and spirits, far more than over their bodies. By the purchase of every print which hangs on your walls, of every cup out of which you drink, and every table off which you eat your bread, you are educating a mass of men in one way or another. You are either employing them healthily or unwholesomely; you are making them lead happy or unhappy lives; you are leading them to look at Nature, and to love her—to think, to feel, to enjoy,—or you are blinding them to Nature, and keeping them bound, like beasts of burden, in mechanical and monotonous employments. We shall all be asked one day, why we did not think more of this.

Well but, you will say, how can we decide what we ought to buy, but by our likings? You would not have us buy what we don't like? No, but I would have you thoroughly sure that there is an absolute right and wrong in all art, and try to find out the right, and like that; and, secondly,

sometimes to sacrifice a careless preference or fancy to what you know is for the good of your fellow-creatures. For instance, when you spend a guinea upon an engraving, what have you done? You have paid a man for a certain number of hours to sit at a dirty table, in a dirty room, inhaling the fumes of nitric acid, stooping over a steel plate, on which, by the help of a magnifying glass, he is, one by one, laboriously cutting out certain notches and scratches, of which the effect is to be the copy of another man's work. You cannot suppose you have done a very charitable thing in this! On the other hand, whenever you buy a small water-colour drawing, you have employed a man happily and healthily, working in a clean room (if he likes), or more probably still, out in the pure country and fresh air, thinking about something, and learning something every moment; not straining his eyesight, nor breaking his back, but working in ease and happiness. Therefore if you *can* like a modest water-colour better than an elaborate engraving, do. There may indeed be engravings which are worth the suffering it costs to produce them; but at all events, engravings of public dinners and laying of foundation stones, and such things, might be dispensed with. The engraving ought to be a first-rate picture of a first-rate subject to be worth buying. Farther, I know that many conscientious persons are desirous of encouraging art, but feel at the same time that their judgment is not certain enough to secure their choice of the best kind of art. To such persons I would now especially address myself, fully admitting the greatness of their difficulty. It is not an easy thing to acquire a knowledge of painting; and it is by no means a desirable thing to encourage bad painting. One bad painter makes another, and one bad painting will often spoil a great many healthy judgments. I could name popular painters now living, who have retarded the taste of their generation by twenty years. Unless, therefore, we are certain not merely that we like a painting, but that we are *right* in liking it, we should never buy it. For there is one way of spending money which is perfectly safe, and in which we may be absolutely sure of doing good. I mean, by paying for simple sculpture of natural objects, chiefly flowers and animals. You are aware that the possibilities of error in sculpture are much less than in painting; it is altogether an easier and simpler art, invariably attaining

perfection long before painting, in the progress of a national mind. It may indeed be corrupted by false taste, or thrown into erroneous forms; but for the most part, the feebleness of a sculptor is shown in imperfection and rudeness, rather than in definite error. He does not reach the fineness of the forms of Nature; but he approaches them truly up to a certain point, or, if not so, at all events an honest effort will continually improve him: so that if we set a simple natural form before him, and tell him to copy it, we are sure we have given him a wholesome and useful piece of education; but if we told him to paint it, he might, with all the honesty in the world, paint it wrongly and falsely, to the end of his days.

So much for the workman. But the workman is not the only person concerned. Observe farther, that when you buy a print, the enjoyment of it is confined to yourself and to your friends. But if you carve a piece of stone, and put it on the outside of your house, it will give pleasure to every person who passes along the street—to an innumerable multitude, instead of a few.

Nay but, you say, we ourselves shall not be benefited by the sculpture on the outsides of our houses. Yes, you will, and in an extraordinary degree; for, observe farther, that architecture differs from painting peculiarly in being an art of *accumulation*. The prints bought by your friends, and hung up in their houses, have no collateral effect with yours: they must be separately examined, and if ever they were hung side by side, they would rather injure than assist each other's effect. But the sculpture on your friend's house unites in effect with that on your own. The two houses form one grand mass—far grander than either separately; much more if a third be added—and a fourth; much more if the whole street—if the whole city—join in the solemn harmony of sculpture. Your separate possessions of pictures and prints are to you as if you sang pieces of music with your single voices in your own houses. But your architecture would be as if you all sang together in one mighty choir. In the separate picture it is rare that there exists any very high source of sublime emotion; but the great concerted music of the streets of the city, when turret rises over turret, and casement frowns beyond casement, and tower succeeds to tower along the farthest ridges of the



inhabited hills,—this is a sublimity of which you can at present form no conception; and capable, I believe, of exciting almost the deepest emotion that art can ever strike from the bosoms of men.

And justly the deepest: for it is a law of God and of Nature, that your pleasures—as your virtues—shall be enhanced by mutual aid. As, by joining hand in hand, you can sustain each other best, so, hand in hand, you can delight each other best. And there is indeed a charm and sacredness in street architecture which must be wanting even to that of the temple: it is a little thing for men to unite in the forms of a religious service, but it is much for them to unite, like true brethren, in the arts and offices of their daily lives.

And now, I can conceive only of one objection as likely still to arise in your minds, which I must briefly meet. Your pictures, and other smaller works of art, you can carry with you, wherever you live; your house must be left behind. Indeed, I believe that the wandering habits which have now become almost necessary to our existence, lie more at the root of our bad architecture than any other character of modern times. We always look upon our houses as mere temporary lodgings. We are always hoping to get larger and finer ones, or are forced, in some way or other, to live where we do not choose, and in continual expectation of changing our place of abode. In the present state of society, this is in a great measure unavoidable; but let us remember it is an *evil*; and that so far as it is avoidable, it becomes our duty to check the impulse. It is not for me to lead you at present into any consideration of a matter so closely touching your private interests and feelings; but it surely is a subject for serious thought, whether it might not be better for many of us, if, on attaining a certain position in life, we determined, with God's permission, to choose a home in which to live and die,—a home not to be increased by adding stone to stone and field to field, but which, being enough for all our wishes at that period, we should resolve to be satisfied with for ever. Consider this; and also, whether we ought not to be more in the habit of seeking honour from our descendants than our ancestors; thinking it better to be nobly remembered than nobly born; and striving so to live, that our sons, and our sons' sons, for ages to come, might still lead their children reverently to

the doors out of which we had been carried to the grave, saying: "Look: This was his house: This was his chamber."

I believe that you can bring forward no other serious objection to the principles for which I am pleading. They are so simple, and, it seems to me, so incontrovertible, that I trust you will not leave this room without determining, as you have opportunity, to do something to advance this long-neglected art of domestic architecture. The reasons I have laid before you would have weight, even were I to ask you to go to some considerable expenditure beyond what you at present are accustomed to devote to such purposes; but nothing more would be needed than the diversion of expenditures, at present scattered and unconsidered, into a single and effective channel. Nay, the mere interest of the money which we are accustomed to keep dormant by us in the form of plate and jewellery, would alone be enough to sustain a school of magnificent architecture. And although, in highly wrought plate, and in finely designed jewellery, noble art may occasionally exist, yet in general both jewels and services of silver are matters of ostentation, much more than sources of intellectual pleasure. There are also many evils connected with them—they are a care to their possessors, a temptation to the dishonest, and a trouble and bitterness to the poor. So that I cannot but think that part of the wealth which now lies buried in these doubtful luxuries might most wisely and kindly be thrown into a form which would give perpetual pleasure, not to its possessor only, but to thousands besides, and neither tempt the unprincipled, nor inflame the envious, nor mortify the poor; while, supposing that your own dignity was dear to you, this, you may rely upon it, would be more impressed upon others by the nobleness of your house-walls than by the glistening of your sideboards.

And even supposing that some additional expenditure were required for this purpose, are we indeed so much poorer than our ancestors, that we cannot now, in all the power of Britain, afford to do what was done by every small republic, by every independent city, in the Middle Ages, throughout France, Italy, and Germany? I am not aware of a vestige of domestic architecture, belonging to the great mediæval periods, which, according to its material and

character, is not richly decorated. But look here (Fig. 31),

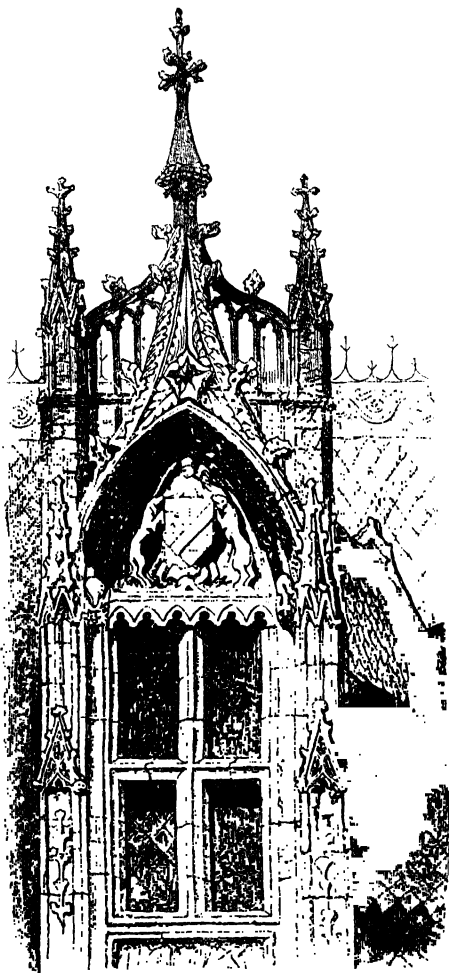


FIG. 31.

look to what an extent decoration *has* been carried in the domestic edifices of a city, I suppose not much superior in importance, commercially speaking, to Manchester, Liverpool, or Birmingham — namely, Rouen, in Normandy. This is a *garret* window, still existing there,— a garret window built by William de Bourgtheroude in the early part of the sixteenth century. I show it you, first, as a proof of what may be made of the features of domestic buildings we are apt to disdain; and secondly, as another example of a beautiful use of the pointed arch, filled by the solid shield of stone, and enclosing a square casement. It is indeed a peculiarly rich and beautiful

instance, but it is a type of which many examples still exist in France, and of which many once existed in your own Scotland, of ruder work indeed, but

admirable always in effect upon the outline of the building.\*

I do not, however, hope that you will often be able to go as far as this in decoration; in fact I would rather recommend a simpler style to you, founded on earlier examples; but, if possible, aided by colour, introduced in various kinds of naturally coloured stones. I have observed that your Scottish lapidaries have admirable taste and skill in the disposition of the pebbles of your brooches and other ornaments of dress; and I have not the least doubt that the genius of your country would, if directed to this particular style of architecture, produce works as beautiful as they would be thoroughly national. The Gothic of Florence, which owes at least the half of its beauty to the art of inlaying, would furnish you with exquisite examples; its sculpture is indeed the most perfect which was ever produced by the Gothic schools; but, besides this rich sculpture, all its flat surfaces are inlaid with coloured stones, much being done with a green serpentine, which forms the greater part of the coast of Genoa. You have, I believe, large beds of this rock in Scotland, and other stones besides, peculiarly Scottish, calculated to form as noble a school of colour as ever existed.†

And, now, I have but two things more to say to you in conclusion.

Most of the lecturers whom you allow to address you lay before you views of the sciences they profess, which are either generally received, or incontrovertible. I come before you at a disadvantage; for I cannot conscientiously tell you anything about architecture but what is at variance with all commonly received views upon the subject. I come before you, professedly to speak of things forgotten or things disputed; and I lay before you, not accepted principles, but questions at issue. Of those questions you are to be the judges, and to you I appeal. You must not, when you

\* One of the most beautiful instances I know of this kind of window is in the ancient house of the Maxwells, on the estate of Sir John Maxwell of Polloc. I had not seen it when I gave this lecture, or I should have preferred it, as an example, to that of Rouen, with reference to modern possibilities of imitation.

† A series of four examples of designs for windows was exhibited at this point of the lecture, but I have not engraved them, as they were hastily made for the purposes of momentary illustration, and are not such as I choose to publish or perpetuate.

leave this room, if you feel doubtful of the truth of what I have said, refer yourselves to some architect of established reputation, and ask him whether I am right or not. You might as well, had you lived in the sixteenth century, have asked a Roman Catholic archbishop his opinion of the first reformer. I deny his jurisdiction; I refuse his decision. I call upon you to be Bereans in architecture, as you are in religion, and to search into these things for yourselves. Remember that, however candid a man may be, it is too much to expect of him, when his career in life has been successful, to turn suddenly on the highway, and to declare that all he has learned has been false, and all he has done, worthless; yet nothing less than such a declaration as this must be made by nearly every existing architect, before he admitted the truth of one word that I have said to you this evening. You must be prepared, therefore, to hear my opinions attacked with all the virulence of established interest, and all the pertinacity of confirmed prejudice; you will hear them made the subjects of every species of satire and invective; but one kind of opposition to them you will never hear; you will never hear them met by quiet, steady, rational argument; for that is the one way in which they *cannot* be met. You will constantly hear me accused—you yourselves may be the first to accuse me—of presumption in speaking thus confidently against the established authority of ages. Presumption! Yes, if I had spoken on my own authority; but I have appealed to two incontrovertible and irrefragable witnesses,—to the nature that is around you—to the reason that is within you. And if you are willing in this matter to take the voice of authority *against* that of nature and of reason, take it in other things also. Take it in religion, as you do in architecture. It is not by a Scottish audience,—not by the descendants of the Reformer and the Covenanter—that I expected to be met with a refusal to believe that the world might possibly have been wrong for *three* hundred years, in their ways of carving stones and setting up of pillars, when they know that they were wrong for *twelve* hundred years, in their marking how the roads divided that led to Hell and Heaven.

You must expect at first that there will be difficulties and inconsistencies in carrying out the new style; but they will soon be conquered if you attempt not too much at once. Do not be afraid of incongruities,—do not think of unities

of effect. Introduce your Gothic line by line and stone by stone; never mind mixing it with your present architecture; your existing houses will be none the worse for having little bits of better work fitted to them; build a porch, or point a window, if you can do nothing else; and remember that it is the glory of Gothic architecture that it can do *anything*. Whatever you really and seriously want, Gothic will do for you; but it must be an *earnest* want. It is its pride to accommodate itself to your needs; and the one general law under which it acts is simply this,—find out what will make you comfortable, build that in the strongest and boldest way, and then set your fancy free in the decoration of it. Don't do anything to imitate this cathedral or that, however beautiful. Do what is convenient; and if the form be a new one, so much the better; then set your mason's wits to work, to find out some new way of treating it. Only be steadily determined that, even if you cannot get the best Gothic, at least you will have no Greek; and in a few years' time,—in less time than you could learn a new science or a new language thoroughly,—the whole art of your native country will be reanimated.

And now, lastly. When this shall be accomplished, do not think it will make little difference to you, and that you will be little the happier, or little the better for it. You have at present no conception, and can have none, how much you would enjoy a truly beautiful architecture; but I can give you a proof of it which none of you will be able to deny. You will all assuredly admit this principle,—that whatever temporal things are spoken of in the Bible as emblems of the highest spiritual blessings, must be *good things* in themselves. You would allow that bread, for instance, would not have been used as an emblem of the word of life, unless it had been good, and necessary for man; nor water used as the emblem of sanctification unless it also had been good and necessary for man. You will allow that oil, and honey, and balm are good, when David says, "Let the righteous reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil;" or, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth;" or, when Jeremiah cries out in his weeping, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?" You would admit at once that the man who said there was no taste in the literal honey, and no healing in the literal balm, must be of distorted,

judgment, since God had used them as emblems of spiritual sweetness and healing. And how, then, will you evade the conclusion, that there must be joy, and comfort, and instruction in the literal beauty of architecture, when God, descending in his utmost love to the distressed Jerusalem, and addressing to her his most precious and solemn promises, speaks to her in such words as these: "Oh, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,"—What shall be done to her?—What brightest emblem of blessing will God set before her? "Behold, I will *lay thy stones with fair colours*, and thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy *windows of agates*, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." Nor is this merely an emblem of spiritual blessing; for that blessing is added in the concluding words, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

## ADDENDA TO LECTURES I AND II

THE delivery of the foregoing lectures excited, as it may be imagined, considerable indignation among the architects who happened to hear them, and elicited various attempts at reply. As it seemed to have been expected by the writers of these replies, that in two lectures, each of them lasting not much more than an hour, I should have been able completely to discuss the philosophy and history of the architecture of the world, besides meeting every objection, and reconciling every apparent contradiction, which might suggest itself to the minds of hearers with whom, probably, from first to last, I had not a single exactly correspondent idea, relating to the matters under discussion, it seems unnecessary to notice any of them in particular. But as this volume may perhaps fall into the hands of readers who have not time to refer to the works in which my views have been expressed more at large, and as I shall now not be able to write or to say anything more about architecture for some time to come, it may be useful to state here, and explain in the shortest possible compass, the main gist of the propositions which I desire to maintain respecting that art; and also to note and answer, once for all, such arguments as are ordinarily used by the architects of the modern school to controvert these propositions. They may be reduced under six heads.

1. That Gothic or Romanesque construction is nobler than Greek construction.

2. That ornamentation is the principal part of architecture.

3. That ornamentation should be visible.

4. That ornamentation should be natural.

5. That ornamentation should be thoughtful.

6. And that therefore Gothic ornamentation is nobler than Greek ornamentation, and Gothic architecture the only architecture which should now be built.

Proposition 1st.—*Gothic or Romanesque construction is* .



*nobler than Greek construction.\** That is to say, building an arch, vault, or dome, is a nobler and more ingenious work than laying a flat stone or beam over the space to be covered. It is, for instance, a nobler and more ingenious thing to build an arched bridge over a stream, than to lay two pine-trunks across from bank to bank; and, in like manner, it is a nobler and more ingenious thing to build an arch over a window, door, or room, than to lay a single flat stone over the same space.

No architects have ever attempted seriously to controvert this proposition. Sometimes, however, they say that "of two ways of doing a thing, the best and most perfect is not always to be adopted, for there may be particular reasons for employing an inferior one." This I am perfectly ready to grant, only let them show their reasons in each particular case. Sometimes also they say, that there is a charm in the simple construction which is lost in the scientific one. This I am also perfectly ready to grant. There is a charm in Stonehenge which there is not in Amiens Cathedral, and a charm in an Alpine pine bridge which there is not in the Ponte della Trinita at Florence, and, in general, a charm in savageness which there is not in science. But do not let it be said, therefore, that savageness is science.

Proposition 2nd.—*Ornamentation is the principal part of architecture.* That is to say, the highest nobility of a building does not consist in its being well built, but in its being nobly sculptured or painted.

This is always, and at the first hearing of it, very naturally, considered one of my most heretical propositions. It is also one of the most important I have to maintain;

\* The constructive value of Gothic architecture is, however, far greater than that of Romanesque, as the pointed arch is not only susceptible of an infinite variety of forms and applications to the weight to be sustained, but it possesses, in the outline given to its masonry at its perfect periods, the means of self-sustainment to a far greater degree than the round arch. I pointed out, for, I believe, the first time, the meaning and constructive value of the Gothic cusp, in page 120 of the first volume of the *Stones of Venice*. That statement was first denied, and then taken advantage of, by modern architects; and, considering how often it has been alleged that I have no *practical* knowledge of architecture, it cannot but be matter of some triumph to me, to find *The Builder*, of the 21st January, of this year, describing, as a new invention, the successful application to a church in Carlow of the principle which I laid down in the year 1851.

and it must be permitted me to explain it at some length. The first thing to be required of a building—not, observe, the *highest* thing, but the first thing—is that it shall answer its purposes completely, permanently, and at the smallest expense. If it is a house, it should be just of the size convenient for its owner, containing exactly the kind and number of rooms that he wants, with exactly the number of windows he wants, put in the places that he wants. If it is a church, it should be just large enough for its congregation, and of such shape and disposition as shall make them comfortable in it and let them hear well in it. If it be a public office, it should be so disposed as is most convenient for the clerks in their daily avocations; and so on; all this being utterly irrespective of external appearance or æsthetic considerations of any kind, and all being done solidly, securely, and at the smallest necessary cost.

The *sacrifice* of any of these first requirements to external appearance is a futility and absurdity. Rooms must not be darkened to make the ranges of windows symmetrical. Useless wings must not be added on one side to balance useful wings on the other, but the house built with one wing, if the owner has no need of two; and so on.

But observe, in doing all this, there is no High, or as it is commonly called, Fine Art, required at all. There may be much science, together with the lower form of art, or “handicraft,” but there is as yet no *Fine Art*. House-building, on these terms, is no higher thing than ship-building. It indeed will generally be found that the edifice designed with this masculine reference to utility will have a charm about it, otherwise unattainable, just as a ship, constructed with simple reference to its service against powers of wind and wave, turns out one of the loveliest things that human hands produce. Still, we do not, and properly do not, hold ship-building to be a fine art, nor preserve in our memories the names of immortal ship-builders; neither, so long as the mere utility and constructive merit of the building are regarded, is architecture to be held a fine art, nor are the names of architects to be remembered immortally. For any one may at any time be taught to build the ship, or (thus far) the house, and there is nothing deserving of immortality in doing what any one may be taught to do.

But when the house, or church, or other building is thus

far designed, and the forms of its dead walls and dead roofs are up to this point determined, comes the divine part of the work—namely, to turn these dead walls into living ones. Only Deity, that is to say, those who are taught by Deity, can do that.

And that is to be done by painting and sculpture, that is to say, by ornamentation. Ornamentation is therefore the principal part of architecture, considered as a subject of fine art.

Now observe. It will at once follow from this principle, that *a great architect must be a great sculptor or painter.*

This is a universal law. No person who is not a great sculptor or painter *can* be an architect. If he is not a sculptor or painter, he can only be a *builder*.

The three greatest architects hitherto known in the world were Phidias, Giotto, and Michael Angelo; with all of whom, architecture was only their play, sculpture and painting their work. All great works of architecture in existence are either the work of single sculptors or painters, or of societies of sculptors and painters, acting collectively for a series of years. A Gothic cathedral is properly to be defined as a piece of the most magnificent associative sculpture, arranged on the noblest principles of building, for the service and delight of multitudes; and the proper definition of architecture, as distinguished from sculpture, is merely "the art of designing sculpture for a particular place, and placing it there on the best principles of building."

Hence it clearly follows, that in modern days we have no *architects*. The term "architecture" is not so much as understood by us. I am very sorry to be compelled to the discourtesy of stating this fact, but a fact it is, and a fact which it is necessary to state strongly.

Hence also it will follow, that the first thing necessary to the possession of a school of architecture is the formation of a school of able sculptors, and that till we have that, nothing we can do can be called architecture at all.

This, then, being my second proposition, the so-called "architects" of the day, as the reader will imagine, are not willing to admit it, or to admit any statement which at all involves it; and every statement, tending in this direction, which I have hitherto made, has of course been met by eager opposition; opposition which perhaps would have been still more energetic, but that architects have not, I

think, till lately, been quite aware of the lengths to which I was prepared to carry the principle.

The arguments, or assertions, which they generally employ against this second proposition and its consequences, are the following.

First. That the true nobility of architecture consists, not in decoration (or sculpture), but in the "disposition of masses," and that architecture is, in fact, the "art of proportion."

It is difficult to overstate the enormity of the ignorance which this popular statement implies. For the fact is, that *all* art, and all Nature, depend on the "disposition of masses." Painting, sculpture, music, and poetry, depend all equally on the "proportion," whether of colours, stones, notes, or words. Proportion is a principle, not of architecture, but of existence. It is by the laws of proportion that stars shine, that mountains stand, and rivers flow. Man can hardly perform any act of his life, can hardly utter two words of innocent speech, or move his hand in accordance with those words, without involving some reference, whether taught or instinctive, to the laws of proportion. And in the fine arts, it is impossible to move a single step, or to execute the smallest and simplest piece of work, without involving all those laws of proportion in their full complexity. To arrange (by invention) the folds of a piece of drapery, or dispose the locks of hair on the head of a statue, requires as much sense and knowledge of the laws of proportion as to dispose the masses of a cathedral. The one are indeed smaller than the other, but the relations between 1, 2, 4, and 8, are precisely the same as the relations between 6, 12, 24, and 48. So that the assertion that "architecture is *par excellence* the art of proportion," could never be made except by persons who know nothing of art in general; and, in fact, never *is* made except by those architects, who, not being artists, fancy that the one poor æsthetic principle of which they *are* cognisant is the whole of art. They find that the "disposition of masses" is the only thing of importance in the art with which they are acquainted, and fancy therefore that it is peculiar to that art; whereas the fact is, that all great art *begins* exactly where theirs *ends*, with the "disposition of masses." The assertion that Greek architecture, as opposed to Gothic architecture, is the "architecture of proportion," is another

of the results of the same broad ignorance. First, it is a calumny of the old Greek style itself, which, like every other good architecture that ever existed, depends more on its grand figure sculpture than on its proportions of parts; so that to copy the form of the Parthenon without its friezes and frontal statuary, is like copying the figure of a human being without its eyes and mouth; and, in the second place, so far as modern pseudo-Greek work *does* depend on its proportions more than Gothic work, it does so, not because it is better proportioned, but because it has nothing *but* proportion to depend upon. Gesture is in like manner of more importance to a pantomime actor than to a tragedian, not because his gesture is more refined, but because he has no tongue. And the proportions of our common Greek work are important to it undoubtedly, but not because they are or ever can be more subtle than Gothic proportion, but because that work has no sculpture, nor colour, nor imagination, nor sacredness, nor any other quality whatsoever in it, but ratios of measures. And it is difficult to express with sufficient force the absurdity of the supposition that there is more room for refinements of proportion in the relations of seven or eight equal pillars, with the triangular end of a roof above them, than between the shafts and buttresses, and porches, and pinnacles, and vaultings, and towers, and all other doubly and trebly multiplied magnificences of membership which form the framework of a Gothic temple.

Second Reply.—It is often said, with some appearance of plausibility, that I dwell in all my writings on little things and contemptible details; and not on essential and large things. Now, in the first place, as soon as our architects become capable of doing and managing little and contemptible things, it will be time to talk about larger ones; at present I do not see that they can design so much as a niche or a bracket, and therefore they need not as yet think about anything larger. For although, as both just now, and always, I have said, there is as much science of arrangement needed in the designing of a small group of parts as of a large one, yet assuredly designing the larger one is *not the easier* work of the two. For the eye and mind can embrace the smaller object more completely, and if the powers of conception are feeble, they get embarrassed by the inferior members which fall *within* the divisions of the larger

design.\* So that, of course, the best way is to begin with the smaller features; for most assuredly, those who cannot design small things cannot design large ones; and yet, on the other hand, whoever can design small things *perfectly*, can design whatever he chooses. The man who, without copying, and by his own true and original power, can arrange a cluster of rose-leaves nobly, can design anything. He may fall from want of taste or feeling, but not from want of power.

And the real reason why architects are so eager in protesting against my close examination of details, is simply that they know they dare not meet me on that ground. Being, as I have said, in reality *not* architects, but builders, they can indeed raise a large building, with copied ornaments, which, being huge and white, they hope the public may pronounce "handsome." But they cannot design a cluster of oak-leaves—no, nor a single human figure—no, nor so much as a beast, or a bird, or a bird's nest! Let them first learn to invent as much as will fill a quatrefoil, or point a pinnacle, and then it will be time enough to reason with them on the principles of the sublime.

But farther. The things that I have dwelt upon in examining buildings, though often their least parts, are always in reality their principal parts. That is the principal part of a building in which its mind is contained, and that, as I have just shown, is its sculpture and painting. I do with a building as I do with a man, watch the eye and the lips: when they are bright and eloquent, the form of the body is of little consequence.

Whatever other objections have been made to this second proposition, arise, as far as I remember, merely from a confusion of the idea of essentialness or primariness with the idea of nobleness. The essential thing in a building,—its *first* virtue,—is that it be strongly built, and fit for its uses. The noblest thing in a building, and its *highest* virtue, is that it be nobly sculptured or painted.†

One or two important corollaries yet remain to be

\* Thus, in speaking of Pugin's designs, I said, "Expect no cathedrals of him; but no one, at present, can design a better finial, though he will never design even a finial perfectly." But even this I said less with reference to powers of arrangement than to materials of fancy; for many men have stone enough to last them through a boss or a bracket, but not to last them through a church front.

† Of course I use the term painting as including every mode of applying colour.

stated. It has just been said that to sacrifice the convenience of a building to its external appearance is a futility and absurdity, and that convenience and stability are to be attained at the smallest cost. But when that convenience *has* been attained, the adding the noble characters of life by painting and sculpture is a work in which all possible cost may be wisely admitted. There is great difficulty in fully explaining the various bearings of this proposition, so as to do away with the chances of its being erroneously understood and applied. For although, in the first designing of the building, nothing is to be admitted but what is wanted, and no useless wings are to be added to balance useful ones, yet in its ultimate designing, when its sculpture and colour become precious, it may be that actual room is wanted to display them, or richer symmetry wanted to deserve them; and in such cases even a useless wall may be built to bear the sculpture, as at San Michele of Lucca, or a useless portion added to complete the cadences, as at St. Mark's of Venice, or useless height admitted in order to increase the impressiveness, as in nearly every noble building in the world. But the right to do this is dependent upon the actual *purpose* of the building becoming no longer one of utility merely; as the purpose of a cathedral is not so much to shelter the congregation as to awe them. In such cases even some sacrifice of convenience may occasionally be admitted, as in the case of certain forms of pillared churches. But for the most part, the great law is, convenience first, and then the noblest decoration possible; and this is peculiarly the case in domestic buildings, and such public ones as are constantly to be used for practical purposes.

Proposition 3rd.—*Ornamentation should be visible.*

The reader may imagine this to be an indisputable position; but, practically, it is one of the last which modern architects are likely to admit; for it involves much more than appears at first sight. To render ornamentation, with all its qualities, clearly and entirely visible in its appointed place on the building, requires a knowledge of effect and a power of design which few even of the best artists possess, and which modern architects, so far from possessing, do not so much as comprehend the existence of. But, without dwelling on this highest manner of rendering ornament "visible," I desire only at present to convince

the reader thoroughly of the main fact asserted in the text, that while modern builders decorate the *tops* of buildings, mediæval builders decorated the *bottom*. So singular is the ignorance yet prevailing of the first principles of Gothic architecture, that I saw this assertion marked with notes of interrogation in several of the reports of these Lectures; although, at Edinburgh, it was only necessary for those who doubted it to have walked to Holyrood Chapel, in order to convince themselves of the truth of it, so far as their own city was concerned; and although, most assuredly, the cathedrals of Europe have now been drawn often enough to establish the very simple fact that their best sculpture is in their porches, not in their steeples. However, as this great Gothic principle seems yet unacknowledged, let me state it here, once for all, namely, that the whole building is decorated, in all pure and fine examples, with the most exactly studied respect to the powers of the eye; the richest and most delicate sculpture being put on the walls of the porches, or on the façade of the building, just high enough above the ground to secure it from accidental (not from wanton \*) injury. The decoration, as it rises, becomes *always* bolder, and in the buildings of the greatest times, *generally* simpler. Thus at San Zeno, and the duomo of Verona, the only delicate decorations are on the porches and lower walls of the façades, the rest of the buildings being left comparatively plain; in the ducal palace of Venice the only very careful work is in the lowest capitals; and so also the richness of the work diminishes upwards in the transepts of Rouen, and façades of Bayeux, Rheims, Amiens, Abbeville,† Lyons, and Notre Dame of Paris. But in the middle and later Gothic the tendency is to produce an equal richness of *effect* over the whole building, or even to increase the richness towards the top: but this is done so skilfully that no fine work is wasted; and when the spectator ascends to the higher points of the building, which he thought were of the most consummate delicacy, he finds them Herculean

\* Nothing is more notable in good Gothic than the confidence of its builders in the respect of the people for their work. A great school of architecture cannot exist when this respect cannot be calculated upon, as it would be vain to put fine sculpture within the reach of a population whose only pleasure would be in defacing it.

† The church at Abbeville is less flamboyant, but well deserves, for the exquisite beauty of its porches, to be named even with the great works of the thirteenth century. •



in strength and rough-hewn in style, the really delicate work being all put at the base. The general treatment of Romanesque work is to increase the *number* of arches at the top, which at once enriches and lightens the mass, and to put the finest *sculpture* of the arches at the bottom. In towers of all kinds and periods the *effective* enrichment is towards the top, and most rightly, since their dignity is in their height; but they are never made the recipients of fine sculpture, with, as far as I know, the single exception of Giotto's campanile, which indeed has fine sculpture, *but it is at the bottom*.

The façade of Wells Cathedral seems to be an exception to the general rule, in having its principle decoration at the top; but it is on a scale of perfect power and effectiveness; while in the base modern Gothic of Milan Cathedral the statues are cut delicately everywhere, and the builders think it a merit that the visitor must climb to the roof before he can see them; and our modern Greek and Italian architecture reaches the utmost pitch of absurdity by placing its fine work *at the top only*. So that the general condition of the thing may be stated boldly, as in the text: the principal ornaments of Gothic buildings being in their porches, and of modern buildings, in their parapets.

Proposition 4th.—*Ornamentation should be natural*,—that is to say, should in some degree express or adopt the beauty of natural objects. This law, together with its ultimate reason, is expressed in the statement given in the *Stones of Venice*, vol. i. p. 195: "All noble ornament is the expression of man's delight in God's work."

Observe, it does not hence follow that it should be an exact imitation of, or endeavour in any wise to supersede, God's work. It may consist only in a partial adoption of, and compliance with, the usual forms of natural things, without at all going to the point of imitation; and it is possible that the point of imitation may be closely reached by ornaments, which nevertheless are entirely unfit for their place, and are the signs only of a degraded ambition and an ignorant dexterity. Bad decorators err as easily on the side of imitating Nature as of forgetting her; and the question of the exact degree in which imitation should be attempted under given circumstances, is one of the most subtle and difficult in the whole range of criticism. I have elsewhere examined it at some length, and have yet much

to say about it; but here I can only state briefly that the modes in which ornamentation *ought* to fall short of pure representation or imitation are in the main three, namely,—

A. Conventionalism by cause of colour.

B. Conventionalism by cause of inferiority.

C. Conventionalism by cause of means.

A. Conventionalism by cause of colour.—Abstract colour is not an imitation of Nature, but *is* Nature itself; that is to say, the pleasure taken in blue or red, as such, considered as hues merely, is the same, so long as the brilliancy of the hue is equal, whether it be produced by the chemistry of man, or the chemistry of flowers, or the chemistry of skies. We deal with colour as with sound—so far ruling the power of the light, as we rule the power of the air, producing beauty not necessarily imitative, but sufficient in itself, so that, wherever colour is introduced, ornamentation may cease to represent natural objects, and may consist in mere spots, or bands, or flamings, or any other condition of arrangement favourable to the colour.

B. Conventionalism by cause of inferiority.—In general, ornamentation is set upon certain services, subjected to certain systems, and confined within certain limits; so that its forms require to be lowered or limited in accordance with the required relations. It cannot be allowed to assume the free outlines, or to rise to the perfection of imitation. Whole banks of flowers, for instance, cannot be carved on cathedral fronts, but only narrow mouldings, having some of the characters of banks of flowers. Also, some ornaments require to be subdued in value, that they may not interfere with the effect of others; and all these necessary *inferiorities* are attained by means of departing from natural forms—it being an established law of human admiration that what is most representative of Nature shall, *cæteris paribus*, be most attractive.

• All the various kinds of ornamentation, consisting of spots, points, twisted bands, abstract curves, and other such, owe their peculiar character to this conventionalism “by cause of inferiority.”

C. Conventionalism by cause of means.—In every branch of art, only so much imitation of Nature is to be admitted as is consistent with the ease of the workman and the capacities of the material. Whatever shortcomings are appointed (for they are more than permitted, they are in,

such cases appointed, and meritorious) on account of the untractableness of the material, come under the head of "conventionalism by cause of means."

These conventionalities, then, being duly understood and accepted, in modification of the general law, that law will be, that the glory of all ornamentation consists in the adoption or imitation of the beauties of natural objects, and that no work can be of high value which is not full of this beauty. To this fourth proposition, modern architects have not ventured to make any serious resistance. On the contrary, they seem to be, little by little, gliding into an obscure perception of the fact, that architecture, in most periods of the world, had sculpture upon it, and that the said sculpture generally did represent something intelligible. For instance, we find Mr. Huggins, of Liverpool, lately lecturing upon architecture "in its relations to Nature and the intellect,"\* and gravely informing his hearers that "in the Middle Ages, angels were human figures;" that "some of the richest ornaments of Solomon's temple were imitated from the palm and pomegranate," and that "the Greeks followed the example of the Egyptians in selecting their ornaments from the *plants* of their own country." It is to be presumed that the lecturer has never been in the Elgin or Egyptian room of the British Museum, or it might have occurred to him that the Egyptians and Greeks sometimes also selected their ornaments from the *men* of their own country. But we must not expect too much illumination at once; and as we are told that, in conclusion, Mr Huggins glanced at "the error of architects in neglecting the fountain of wisdom thus open to them in Nature," we may expect in due time large results from the discovery of a source of wisdom so unimagined.

Proposition 5th.—*Ornamentation should be thoughtful.* That is to say, whenever you put a chisel or a pencil into a man's hand for the purpose of enabling him to produce beauty, you are to expect of him that he will think about what he is doing, and feel something about it, and that the expression of this thought or feeling will be the most noble quality in what he produces with his chisel or brush, inasmuch as the power of thinking and feeling is the most noble thing in the man. It will hence follow that as men do not commonly think the same thoughts twice, you are not to

\* See *The Builder*, for January 12, 1854.

require\* of them that they shall do the same thing twice. You are to expect another and a different thought of them, as soon as one thought has been well expressed.

Hence, therefore, it follows also that all noble ornamentation is perpetually varied ornamentation, and that the moment you find ornamentation unchanging, you may know that it is of a degraded kind or degraded school. To this law, the only exceptions arise out of the uses of monotony, as a contrast to change. Many subordinate architectural mouldings are severely alike in their various parts (though never unless they are thoroughly subordinate, for monotony is always deathful according to the degree of it), in order to set off change in others; and a certain monotony or similarity must be introduced among the most changeful ornaments in order to enhance and exhibit their own changes.

The truth of this proposition is self-evident; for no art can be noble which is incapable of expressing thought, and no art is capable of expressing thought which does not change. To require of an artist that he should always reproduce the same picture, would be not one whit more base than to require of a carver that he should always reproduce the same sculpture.

The principle is perfectly clear and altogether incontrovertible. Apply it to modern Greek architecture, and that architecture must cease to exist; for it depends absolutely on copyism.

The sixth proposition above stated, that *Gothic ornamentation is nobler than Greek ornamentation*, etc., is therefore sufficiently proved by the acceptance of this one principle, no less important than unassailable. Of all that I have to bring forward respecting architecture, this is the one I have most at heart; for on the acceptance of this depends the determination whether the workman shall be a living, progressive, and happy human being, or whether he shall be a mere machine, with its valves smoothed by heart's blood instead of oil,—the most pitiable form of slave.

And it is with especial reference to the denial of this principle in modern and renaissance architecture that I speak of that architecture with a bitterness which appears to many readers extreme, while in reality, so far from exaggerating, I have not grasp enough of thought to embrace,

the evils which have resulted among all the orders of European society from the introduction of the Renaissance schools of building, in turning away the eyes of the beholder from natural beauty, and reducing the workman to the level of a machine. In the Gothic times, writing, painting, carving, casting,—it mattered not what,—were all works done by thoughtful and happy men; and the illumination of the volume, and the carving and casting of wall and gate, employed, not thousands, but millions, of true and noble *artists* over all Christian lands. Men in the same position are now left utterly without intellectual power or pursuit, and, being unhappy in their work, they rebel against it: hence one of the worst forms of Unchristian Socialism. So again, there being now no nature or variety in architecture, the multitude are not interested in it; therefore, for the present, they have lost their taste for art altogether, so that you can no longer trust sculpture within their reach. Consider the innumerable forms of evil involved in the temper and taste of the existing populace of London or Paris, as compared with the temper of the populace of Florence, when the quarter of Santa Maria Novella received its title of “Joyful Quarter,” from the rejoicings of the multitude at getting a new picture into their church, better than the old ones;—all this difference being exclusively chargeable on the Renaissance architecture. And then, farther, if we remember, not only the revolutionary ravage of sacred architecture, but the immeasurably greater destruction effected by the Renaissance builders and their satellites, wherever they came, destruction so wide-spread that there is not a town in France or Italy but it has to deplore the deliberate overthrow of more than half its noblest monuments, in order to put up Greek porticoes or palaces in their stead; adding also all the blame of the ignorance of the meaner kind of men, operating in thousands of miserable abuses upon the frescoes, books, and pictures, as the architects’ hammers did on the carved work of the Middle Ages; \* and, finally, if we examine the influence which the

\* Nothing appears to me much more wonderful than the remorseless way in which the educated ignorance, even of the present day, will sweep away an ancient monument, if its preservation be not absolutely consistent with immediate convenience or economy. Putting aside all antiquarian considerations, and all artistical ones, I wish that people would only consider the steps, and the weight of the following very simple argument. You allow it is wrong to waste time, that is, your own time; but then

luxury,\* and, still more, the heathenism, joined with the essential dulness of these schools, have had on the upper classes of society, it will ultimately be found that no expressions are energetic enough to describe, nor broad enough to embrace, the enormous moral evils which have risen from them.

I omitted, in preparing the preceding lecture for the press, a passage referring to this subject, because it appeared to me, in its place, hardly explained by preceding statements. But I give it here unaltered, as being, in sober earnest, but too weak to characterise the tendencies of the "accursed" architecture of which it speaks.

"Accursed," I call it, with deliberate purpose. It needed but the gathering up of a Babylonish garment to trouble Israel;—these marble garments of the ancient idols of the Gentiles, how many have *they* troubled! Gathered out of their ruins by the second Babylon,—gathered by the Papal Church in the extremity of her sin;—raised up by her, not when she was sending forth her champions to preach in the highway, and pine in the desert, and perish in the fire, but in the very scarlet fruitage and fulness of her guilt, when her priests vested themselves not with purple only, but with blood, and bade the cups of their feasting foam not with wine only, but with hemlock;—raised by the hands of the Leos and the Borgias, raised first into that mighty temple where the seven hills slope to the Tiber, that marks by its massy dome the central spot, where Rome has reversed the words of Christ, and, as He vivified the stone to the apostleship, she petrifies the apostleship into the stumbling stone;—exalted there first as if to mark what work it had to do, it went forth to paralyse or to pollute, and wherever it came, the lustre faded from the streets of our cities, the grey towers and glorious arches of our abbeys fell by the river sides, the love of Nature was uprooted from the hearts of men, base luxuries and cruel formalisms were festered and frozen into them from their youth; and at last, where, from his fair Gothic chapel beside the Seine, the king St. Louis

it must be still more wrong to waste other people's; for you have some right to your own time, but none to theirs. Well, then, if it is thus wrong to waste the time of the living, it must be still more wrong to waste the time of the dead; for the living can redeem their time, the dead cannot. But you waste the best of the time of the dead when you destroy the works they have left you; for to those works they gave the best of their time, intending them for immortality.

had gone forth, followed by his thousands in the cause of Christ, another king was dragged forth from the gates of his Renaissance palace,\* to die, by the hands of the thousands of his people gathered in another crusade; or what shall that be called—whose sign was not the cross, but the guillotine?"

I have not space here to pursue the subject farther, nor shall I be able to write anything more respecting architecture for some time to come. But in the meanwhile I would most earnestly desire to leave with the reader this one subject of thought—*The Life of the Workman*. For it is singular, and far more than singular, that among all the writers who have attempted to examine the principles stated in the *Stones of Venice*, not one † has as yet made a single comment on what was precisely and accurately the most important chapter in the whole book; namely, the description of the nature of Gothic architecture, as involving the liberty of the workman (vol. ii. ch. vi.). I had hoped that whatever might be the prejudices of modern architects, there would have been found some among them quick-sighted enough to see the bearings of this principle, and generous enough to support it. There has hitherto stood forward not *one*.

But my purpose must at last be accomplished for all this. The labourer among the gravestones of our modern architecture must yet be raised up and become a living soul. Before he can be thus raised, the whole system of Greek architecture, as practised in the present day, must be annihilated; but it *will* be annihilated, and that speedily. For truth and judgment are its declared opposites, and against these nothing ever finally prevailed, or shall prevail.

\* The character of Renaissance architecture, and the spirit which dictated its adoption, may be remembered as having been centred and symbolised in the palace of Versailles; whose site was chosen by Louis the Fourteenth, in order that from thence he might *not* see St. Denis, the burial place of his family. The cost of the palace in twenty-seven years is stated in *The Builder* for March 18th of this year to have been £3,246,000 money of that period, equal to about seven millions now (£900,000 having been expended in the year 1686 alone). The building is thus notably illustrative of the two feelings which were stated in the *Stones of Venice* to be peculiarly characteristic of the Renaissance spirit, the Pride of State and Fear of Death. Compare the horror of Louis the Fourteenth at the sight of the Tower of St. Denis, with the feeling which prompted the Scaligeri at Verona to set their tombs within fifteen feet of their palace walls.

† An article in *Fraser's Magazine*, which has appeared since these sheets were sent to press, forms a solitary exception.

## LECTURE III

### TURNER, AND HIS WORKS

My object this evening is not so much to give you any account of the works or the genius of the great painter whom we have so lately lost (which it would require rather a year than an hour to do), as to give you some idea of the position which his works hold with respect to the landscape of other periods, and of the general condition and prospects of the landscape art of the present day. I will not lose time in prefatory remarks, as I have little enough at any rate, but will enter abruptly on my subject.

You are all of you well aware that landscape seems hardly to have exercised any strong influence, as such, on any pagan nation, or pagan artist. I have no time to enter into any details on this, of course, most intricate and difficult subject; but I will only ask you to observe, that wherever natural scenery is alluded to by the ancients, it is either agriculturally, with the kind of feeling that a good Scotch farmer has; sensually, in the enjoyment of sun or shade, cool winds or sweet scents; fearfully, in a mere vulgar dread of rocks and desolate places, as compared with the comfort of cities; or, finally, superstitiously, in the personification or deification of natural powers, generally with much degradation of their impressiveness, as in the paltry fables of Ulysses receiving the winds in bags from Æolus, and of the Cyclops hammering lightning sharp at the ends, on an anvil.\* Of course you will here and there find feeble evidences of a higher sensibility, chiefly, I think, in Plato, Æschylus, Aristophanes, and Virgil. Homer, though in the epithets he applies to landscape always

\* Of course I do not mean by calling these fables "paltry" to dispute their neatness, ingenuity, or moral depth; but only their want of apprehension of the extent and awfulness of the phenomena introduced. So also, in denying Homer's interest in Nature, I do not mean to deny his accuracy of observation, or his power of seizing on the main points of landscape, but I deny the power of landscape over his heart, unless when closely associated with, and altogether subordinate to, some human interest.



thoroughly graphic, uses the same epithet for rocks,\* seas, and trees, from one end of his poem to the other, evidently without the smallest interest in anything of the kind; and in the mass of heathen writers, the absence of sensation on these subjects is singularly painful. For instance, in that, to my mind, most disgusting of all so-called poems, "The Journey to Brundisium," you remember that Horace takes exactly as much interest in the scenery he is passing through as Sancho Panza would have done.

You will find, on the other hand, that the language of the Bible is specifically distinguished from all other early literature by its delight in natural imagery; and that the dealings of God with his people are calculated peculiarly to awaken this sensibility within them. Out of the monotonous valley of Egypt they are instantly taken into the midst of the mightiest mountain scenery in the peninsula of Arabia; and that scenery is associated in their minds with the immediate manifestation and presence of the Divine Power; so that mountains for ever afterwards become invested with a peculiar sacredness in their minds; while their descendants being placed in what was then one of the loveliest districts upon the earth, full of glorious vegetation, bounded on one side by the sea, on the north by "that goodly mountain" Lebanon, on the south and east by deserts, whose barrenness enhanced by their contrast the sense of the perfection of beauty in their own land, they became, by these means, and by the touch of God's own hand upon their hearts, sensible to the appeal of natural scenery in a way in which no other people were at the time; and their literature is full of expressions, not only testifying a vivid sense of the power of Nature over man, but showing that *sympathy with natural things themselves*, as if they had human souls, which is the especial characteristic of true love of the works of God. I intended to have insisted on this sympathy at greater length, but I found; only two or three days ago, much of what I had to say to you anticipated in a little book, unpretending, but full of interest, *The Lamp and the Lantern*, by Dr. James Hamilton; and I will therefore only ask you to consider such expressions as that tender and glorious verse in Isaiah, speaking of the cedars on the mountains as rejoicing over the fall of the king of Assyria: "Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since *thou* art gone down

to the grave, no feller is come up against us." See what sympathy there is here, as if with the very hearts of the trees themselves. So also in the words of Christ, in his personification of the lilies: "They toil not, neither do they spin." Consider such expressions as, "The sea saw that, and fled. Jordan was driven back. The mountains skipped like rams; and the little hills like lambs." Try to find anything in profane writing like this; and note farther that the whole book of Job appears to have been chiefly written and placed in the inspired volume in order to show the value of natural history, and its power on the human heart. I cannot pass by it without pointing out the evidences of the beauty of the country that Job inhabited.\* Observe, first, it was an arable country. "The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them." It was a pastoral country: his substance, besides camels and asses, was 7000 sheep. It was a mountain country, fed by streams descending from the high snows. "My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: What time they wax warm they vanish: when it is hot they are consumed out of their place." Again: "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean." Again: "Drought and heat consume the snow waters." It was a rocky country, with forests and verdure rooted in the rocks. "His branch shooteth forth in his garden; his roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones." Again: "Thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field." It was a place visited, like the valleys of Switzerland, by convulsions and falls of mountains. "Surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place." "The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth." "He removeth the mountains and they know not: he overturneth them in his anger." "He putteth forth his hand upon the rock: he overturneth the mountains by the roots: he cutteth out rivers among the rocks." I have not time to go farther into this; but you see Job's country was one like your own, full of pleasant brooks and rivers, rushing among the rocks, and of all other sweet and noble

\* This passage, respecting the book of Job, was omitted in the delivery of the Lecture, for want of time. •

elements of landscape. The magnificent allusions to natural scenery throughout the book are therefore calculated to touch the heart to the end of time.

Then at the central point of Jewish prosperity, you have the first great naturalist the world ever saw, Solomon; not permitted, indeed, to anticipate, in writing, the discoveries of modern times, but so gifted as to show us that heavenly wisdom is manifested as much in the knowledge of the hyssop that springeth out of the wall as in political and philosophical speculation.

The books of the Old Testament, as distinguished from all other early writings, are thus prepared for an everlasting influence over humanity; and, finally, Christ himself, setting the concluding example to the conduct and thoughts of men, spends nearly his whole life in the fields, the mountains, or the small country villages of Judea; and in the very closing scenes of his life, will not so much as sleep within the walls of Jerusalem, but rests at the little village of Bethphage, walking in the morning, and returning in the evening, through the peaceful avenues of the mount of Olives, to and from his work of teaching in the temple.

It would thus naturally follow, both from the general tone and teaching of the Scriptures, and from the example of our Lord himself, that wherever Christianity was preached and accepted, there would be an immediate interest awakened in the works of God, as seen in the natural world; and, accordingly, this is the second universal and distinctive character of Christian art, as distinguished from all pagan work, the first being a peculiar spirituality in its conception of the human form, preferring holiness of expression and strength of character to beauty of features or of body, and the second, as I say, its intense fondness for natural objects—animals, leaves and flowers,—inducing an immediate transformation of the cold and lifeless pagan ornamentation into vivid imagery of Nature. Of course this manifestation of feeling was at first checked by the circumstances under which the Christian religion was disseminated. The art of the first three centuries is entirely subordinate,—restrained partly by persecution, partly by a high spirituality, which cared much more about preaching than painting; and then when, under Constantine, Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire, myriads of persons gave the aid of their wealth and of their

art to the new religion, who were Christians in nothing but the name, and who decorated a Christian temple just as they would have decorated a pagan one, merely because the new religion had become Imperial. Then, just as the new art was beginning to assume a distinctive form, down came the northern barbarians upon it; and all their superstitions had to be leavened with it, and all their hard hands and hearts softened by it, before their art could appear in anything like a characteristic form. The warfare in which Europe was perpetually plunged retarded this development for ages; but it steadily and gradually prevailed, working from the eighth to the eleventh century like a seed in the ground, showing little signs of life, but still, if carefully examined, changing essentially every day and every hour: at last, in the twelfth century, the blade appears above the black earth; in the thirteenth, the plant is in full leaf.

I begin, then, with the thirteenth century, and must now make to you a general assertion, which, if you will note down and examine at your leisure, you will find true and useful, though I have not time at present to give you full demonstration of it.

I say, then, that the art of the thirteenth century is the foundation of all art,—not merely the foundation, but the root of it; that is to say, succeeding art is not merely built upon it, but was all comprehended in it, and is developed out of it. Passing this great century, we find three successive branches developed from it, in each of the three following centuries. The fourteenth century is pre-eminently the age of *Thought*, the fifteenth the age of *Drawing*, and the sixteenth the age of *Painting*.

Observe, first, the fourteenth century is pre-eminently the age of thought. It begins with the first words of the poem of Dante; and all the great pictorial poems—the mighty series of works in which everything is done to relate, but nothing to imitate—belong to this century. I should only confuse you by giving you the names of marvellous artists, most of them little familiar to British ears, who adorned this century in Italy; but you will easily remember it as the age of Dante and Giotto,—the age of *Thought*.

The men of the succeeding century (the fifteenth) felt that they could not rival their predecessors in invention, but might excel them in execution. Original thoughts belonging to this century are comparatively rare; even

Raphael and Michael Angelo themselves borrowed all their principal ideas and plans of pictures from their predecessors; but they executed them with a precision up to that time unseen. You must understand by the word "drawing" the perfect rendering of forms, whether in sculpture or painting; and then remember the fifteenth century as the age of Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Lorenzo Ghiberti, and Raphael,—pre-eminently the age of *Drawing*.

The sixteenth century produced the four greatest *Painters*, that is to say, managers of colour, whom the world has seen; namely, Tintoret, Paul Veronese, Titian, and Correggio. I need not say more to justify my calling it the age of *Painting*.

This, then, being the state of things respecting art in general, let us next trace the career of landscape through these centuries.

It was only towards the close of the thirteenth century that figure painting began to assume so perfect a condition as to require some elaborate suggestion of landscape background. Up to that time, if any natural object had to be represented, it was done in an entirely conventional way, as you see it upon Greek vases, or in a Chinese porcelain pattern; an independent tree or flower being set upon the white ground, or ground of any colour, wherever there was a vacant space for it, without the smallest attempt to imitate the real colours and relations of the earth and sky about it. But at the close of the thirteenth century, Giotto, and in the course of the fourteenth, Orcagna, sought, for the first time, to give some resemblance to Nature in their backgrounds, and introduced behind their figures pieces of true landscape, formal enough still, but complete in intention, having foregrounds and distances, sky and water, forests and mountains, carefully delineated, not exactly in their true colour, but yet in colour approximating to the truth. The system which they introduced (for though in many points enriched above the work of earlier ages, the Orcagna and Giotto landscape was a very complete piece of recipe) was observed for a long period by their pupils, and may be thus briefly described:—The sky is always pure blue, paler at the horizon, and with a few streaky white clouds in it; the ground is green even to the extreme distance, with brown rocks projecting from it; water is blue streaked with white. The trees are nearly always composed of clusters

of their proper leaves relieved on a black or dark ground, thus (Fig. 32).<sup>\*</sup> And observe carefully, with respect to the complete drawing of the leaves on this tree, and the smallness of their number, the real distinction between noble conventionalism and false conventionalism. You will often hear modern architects defending their monstrous ornamentation on the ground that it is "conventional," and that architectural ornament ought to be conventionalised.



FIG. 32.

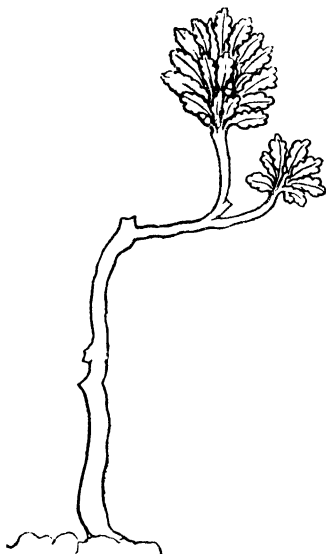


FIG. 33.

Remember when you hear this, that noble conventionalism is not an agreement between the artist and spectator that the one shall misrepresent Nature sixty times over, and the other believe the misrepresentation sixty times over, but it is an agreement that certain means and limitations being prescribed, only that *kind of truth* is to be expected which is consistent with those means. For instance, if Sir Joshua

<sup>\*</sup> Having no memoranda of my own, taken from Giotto's landscape, I had this tree copied from an engraving; but I imagine the rude termination of the stems to be a misrepresentation. Fig. 33 is accurately copied from a MS., certainly executed between 1250 and 1270, and is more truly characteristic of the early manner.

Reynolds had been talking to a friend about the character of a face, and there had been nothing in the room but a deal table and an ink-bottle—and no pens—Sir Joshua would have dipped his finger in the ink, and painted a portrait on the table with his finger,—and a noble portrait too, certainly not delicate in outline, nor representing any of the qualities of the face dependent on rich outline, but getting as much of the face as in that manner was attainable. That is noble conventionalism, and Egyptian work on granite, or illuminator's work in glass, is all conventional in the same sense, but not conventionally false. The two noblest and *truest* carved lions I have ever seen are the two granite ones in the Egyptian room of the British Museum, and yet in them the lions' manes and beards are represented by rings of solid rock, as smooth as a mirror!

There are indeed one or two other conditions of noble conventionalism, noticed more fully in the Addenda to Lectures I. and II. (pp. 222-224); but you will find that they always consist in *stopping short* of Nature, not in falsifying Nature; and thus in Giotto's foliage, he *stops short* of the quantity of leaves on the real tree, but he gives you the form of the leaves represented with perfect truth. His foreground also is nearly always occupied by flowers and herbage, carefully and individually painted from Nature; while, although thus simple in plan, the arrangements of line in these landscapes of course show the influence of the master-mind, and sometimes, where the story requires it, we find the usual formulæ overleaped, and Giotto at Avignon painting the breakers of the sea on a steep shore with great care, while Orcagna, in his *Triumph of Death*, has painted a thicket of brambles mixed with teazles, in a manner worthy of the best days of landscape art.

Now from the landscape of these two men to the landscape of Raphael, Leonardo, and Perugino, the advance consists principally in two great steps: The first, that distant objects were more or less invested with a blue colour,—the second, that trees were no longer painted with a black ground, but with a rich dark brown, or deep green. From Giotto's old age, to the youth of Raphael, the advance in, and knowledge of, landscape, consisted of no more than these two simple steps; but the *execution* of landscape became infinitely more perfect and elaborate. All the flowers and leaves in the foreground were worked out, with

the same perfection as the features of the figures; in the middle distance the brown trees were most delicately defined against the sky; the blue mountains in the extreme distance were exquisitely thrown into aerial gradations, and the sky and clouds were perfect in transparency and softness. But



FIG. 34.

still there is no real advance in knowledge of natural objects. The leaves and flowers are, indeed, admirably painted, and thrown into various intricate groupings, such as Giotto could not have attempted, but the rocks and water are still as conventional and imperfect as ever, except only in colour: the forms of rock in Leonardo's celebrated *Vierge aux Rochers* are literally no better than those on a china plate. Fig. 34 shows a portion of them in mere outline, with one cluster of



the leaves above, and the distant "ideal" mountains. On the whole, the most satisfactory work of the period is that which most resembles missal painting, that is to say, which is fullest of beautiful flowers and animals scattered among the landscape, in the old independent way, like the birds upon a screen. The landscape of Benozzo Gozzoli is exquisitely rich in incident of this kind.

The first man who entirely broke through the conventionality of his time, and painted pure landscape, was Masaccio, but he died too young to effect the revolution of which his genius was capable. It was left for other men to accomplish, namely, for Correggio and Titian. These two painters were the first who relieved the foregrounds of their landscape from the grotesque, quaint, and crowded formalism of the early painters; and gave a close approximation to the forms of Nature in all things; retaining, however, thus much of the old system, that the distances were for the most part painted in deep ultramarine blue, the foregrounds in rich green and brown; there were no effects of sunshine and shadow, but a generally quiet glow over the whole scene; and the clouds, though now rolling in irregular masses, and sometimes richly involved among the hills, were never varied in conception, or studied from Nature. There were no changes of weather in them, no rain clouds or fair-weather clouds, nothing but various shapes of the cumulus or cirrus, introduced for the sake of light on the deep blue sky. Tintoret and Bonifazio introduced more natural effects into this monotonous landscape: in their works we meet with showers of rain, with rainbows, sunsets, bright reflections in water, and so on; but still very subordinate, and carelessly worked out, so as not to justify us in considering their landscape as forming a class by itself.

Fig. 35, which is a branch of a tree from the background of Titian's *St. Jerome*, at Milan, compared with Fig. 32, will give you a distinct idea of the kind of change which took place from the time of Giotto to that of Titian, and you will find that this whole range of landscape may be conveniently classed in three divisions, namely, *Giottesque*, *Leonardesque*, and *Titianesque*; the Giottesque embracing nearly all the work of the fourteenth, the Leonardesque that of the fifteenth, and the Titianesque that of the sixteenth century. Now you see there remained a fourth step to be taken,—the doing away with conventionalism alto-

gether; so as to create the perfect art of landscape painting. The course of the mind of Europe was to do this; but at



FIG. 35.

the very moment when it ought to have been done, the art of all civilised nations was paralysed at once by the operation of the poisonous elements of infidelity and classical learning together, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere. In this paralysis, like a soldier shot as he is just gaining an eminence,

the art of the seventeenth century struggled forward, and sank upon the spot it had been endeavouring to attain. The step which should have freed landscape from conventionalism was actually taken by Claude and Salvator Rosa, but taken in a state of palsy,—taken so as to lose far more than was gained. For up to this time, no painter ever had thought of drawing anything, pebble or blade of grass, or tree or mountain, but as well and distinctly as he could; and if he could not draw it completely, he drew it at least in a way which should thoroughly show his knowledge and feeling of it. For instance, you saw in the oak tree of the Giottesque period, that the main points of the tree, the true shape of leaf and acorn, were all there, perfectly and carefully articulated, and so they continued to be down to the time of Tintoret; both he and Titian working out the separate leaves of their foliage with the most exquisite botanical care. But now observe: as Christianity had brought this love of Nature into Paganism, the return of Paganism in the shape of classical learning at once destroyed this love of Nature; and at the moment when Claude and Salvator made the final effort to paint the *effects* of Nature faithfully, the *objects* of Nature had ceased to be regarded with affection; so that, while people were amused and interested by the new effects of sunsets over green seas, and of tempests bursting on rocky mountains, which were introduced by the rising school, they entirely ceased to require on the one side, or bestow on the other, that care and thought by which alone the beauty of Nature can be understood. The older painting had resembled a careful and deeply studied diagram, illustrative of the most important facts; it was not to be understood or relished without application of serious thought; on the contrary, it developed and addressed the highest powers of mind belonging to the human race; while the Claude and Salvator painting was like a scene in a theatre, viciously and falsely painted throughout, and presenting a deceptive appearance of truth to Nature; understood, as far as it went, in a moment, but conveying no accurate knowledge of anything, and, in all its operations on the mind, unhealthy, hopeless, and profitless.

It was, however, received with avidity; for this main reason, that the architecture, domestic life, and manners of the period were gradually getting more and more artificial; as I showed you last evening, all natural beauty had ceased

to be permitted in architectural decoration, while the habits of society led them more and more to live, if possible, in cities; and the dress, language, and manners of men in general were approximating to that horrible and lifeless condition in which you find them just before the outbreak of the French Revolution.

Now, observe: exactly as hoops, and starch, and false hair, and all that in mind and heart these things typify and betray, as these, I say, gained upon men, there was a necessary reaction in favour of the *natural*. Men had never lived so utterly in defiance of the laws of Nature before; but they could not do this without feeling a strange charm in that which they defied; and, accordingly, we find this reactionary sentiment expressing itself in a base school of what was called *pastoral* poetry; that is to say, poetry written in praise of the country, by men who live in coffee-houses and on the Mall. The essence of pastoral poetry is the sense of strange delightfulness in grass, which is occasionally felt by a man who has seldom set his foot on it; it is essentially the poetry of the cockney, and for the most part corresponds in its aim and rank, as compared with other literature, to the porcelain shepherds and shepherdesses on a chimney-piece as compared with great works of sculpture.

Of course all good poetry, descriptive of rural life, is essentially pastoral, or has the effect of the pastoral on the minds of men living in cities; but the class of poetry which I mean, and which you probably understand, by the term pastoral, is that in which a farmer's girl is spoken of as a "nymph," and a farmer's boy as a "swain," and in which, throughout, a ridiculous and unnatural refinement is supposed to exist in rural life, merely because the poet himself has neither had the courage to endure its hardships, nor the wit to conceive its realities. If you examine the literature of the past century, you will find that nearly all its expressions, having reference to the country, show something of this kind; either a foolish sentimentality, or a morbid fear, both of course coupled with the most curious ignorance. You will find all its descriptive expressions at once vague and monotonous. Brooks are always "purling"; birds always "warbling"; mountains always "lift their horrid peaks above the clouds"; vales always "are lost in the shadow of gloomy woods"; a few more distinct ideas about

haymaking and curds and cream, acquired in the neighbourhood of Richmond Bridge, serving to give an occasional appearance of freshness to the catalogue of the sublime and beautiful which descended from poet to poet; while a few true pieces of pastoral, like the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and Walton's *Angler*, relieved the general waste of dulness. Even in these better productions, nothing is more remarkable than the general conception of the country merely as a series of green fields, and the combined ignorance and dread of more sublime scenery; of which the mysteries and dangers were enhanced by the difficulties of travelling at the period. Thus in Walton's *Angler*, you have a meeting of two friends, one a Derbyshire man, the other a lowland traveller, who is as much alarmed, and uses nearly as many expressions of astonishment, at having to go down a steep hill and ford a brook, as a traveller uses now at crossing the glacier of the Col de Geant. I am not sure whether the difficulties which, until late years, have lain in the way of peaceful and convenient travelling, ought not to have great weight assigned to them among the other causes of the temper of the century; but be that as it may, if you will examine the whole range of its literature—keeping this point in view—I am well persuaded that you will be struck most forcibly by the strange deadness to the higher sources of landscape sublimity which is mingled with the morbid pastoralism. The love of fresh air and green grass forced itself upon the animal natures of men; but that of the sublimer features of scenery had no place in minds whose chief powers had been repressed by the formalisms of the age. And although in the second-rate writers continually, and in the first-rate ones occasionally, you find an affectation of interest in mountains, clouds, and forests, yet whenever they write from their heart, you will find an utter absence of feeling respecting anything beyond gardens and grass. Examine, for instance, the novels of Smollett, Fielding, and Sterne, the comedies of Moliere, and the writings of Johnson and Addison, and I do not think you will find a single expression of true delight in sublime Nature in any one of them. Perhaps Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, in its total absence of sentiment on any subject but humanity, and its entire want of notice of anything at Geneva, which might not as well have been seen at Coxwold, is the most striking instance I could give you; and if you compare with this

negation of feeling on one side, the interludes of Moliere, in which shepherds and shepherdesses are introduced in court dress, you will have a very accurate conception of the general spirit of the age.

It was in such a state of society that the landscape of Claude, Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator Rosa attained its reputation. It is the complete expression on canvas of the spirit of the time. Claude embodies the foolish pastoralism, Salvator the ignorant terror, and Gaspar the dull and affected erudition.

It was, however, altogether impossible that this state of things could long continue. The age which had buried itself in formalism grew weary at last of the restraint; and the approach of a new era was marked by the appearance, and the enthusiastic reception, of writers who took true delight in those wild scenes of Nature which had so long been despised.

I think the first two writers in whom the symptoms of a change are strongly manifested are Mrs. Radcliffe and Rousseau; in both of whom the love of natural scenery, though mingled in the one case with what was merely dramatic, and in the other with much that was pitifully morbid or vicious, was still itself genuine, and intense, differing altogether in character from any sentiments previously traceable in literature. And then rapidly followed a group of writers, who expressed, in various ways, the more powerful or more pure feeling which had now become one of the strongest instincts of the age. Of these, the principal is your own Walter Scott. Many writers, indeed, describe Nature more minutely and more profoundly; but none show in higher intensity the peculiar passion for what is majestic or lovely in *wild* Nature, to which I am now referring. The whole of the poem of the *Lady of the Lake* is written with almost a boyish enthusiasm for rocks, and lakes, and cataracts; the early novels show the same instinct in equal strength wherever he approaches Highland scenery; and the feeling is mingled, observe, with a most touching and affectionate appreciation of the Gothic architecture, in which alone he found the elements of natural beauty seized by art; so that, to this day, his descriptions of Melrose and Holy Island Cathedral, in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion*, as well as of the ideal abbeys in the *Monastery* and *Antiquary*, together with those of Caerlaverock and

Lochleven Castles in *Guy Mannering* and *The Abbot*, remain the staple possessions and text-books of all travellers, not so much for their beauty or accuracy, as for their *exactly expressing that degree of feeling with which most men in this century can sympathise*.

Together with Scott appeared the group of poets,—Byron, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and, finally, Tennyson,—differing widely in moral principles and spiritual temper, but all agreeing more or less in this love for natural scenery.

Now, you will ask me—and you will ask me most reasonably—how this love of Nature in modern days can be connected with Christianity, seeing it is as strong in the infidel Shelley as in the sacred Wordsworth. Yes, and it is found in far worse men than Shelley. Shelley was an honest unbeliever, and a man of warm affections; but this new love of Nature is found in the most reckless and unprincipled of the French novelists,—in Eugene Sue, in Dumas, in George Sand,—and that intensely. How is this? Simply because the feeling is reactionary; and, in this phase of it, common to the diseased mind as well as to the healthy one. A man dying in the fever of intemperance will cry out for water, and that with a bitterer thirst than a man whose healthy frame naturally delights in the mountain spring more than in the wine cup. The water is not dishonoured by that thirst of the diseased, nor is Nature dishonoured by the love of the unworthy. That love is, perhaps, the only saving element in their minds; and it still remains an indisputable truth that the love of Nature is a characteristic of the Christian heart, just as the hunger for healthy food is characteristic of the healthy frame.

In order to meet this new feeling for Nature, there necessarily arose a new school of landscape painting. That school, like the literature to which it corresponded, had many weak and vicious elements mixed with its noble ones; it had its Mrs. Radcliffes and Rousseaus, as well as its Wordsworths; but, on the whole, the feeling with which Robson drew mountains, and Prout architecture, with which Fielding draws moors, and Stanfield sea—is altogether pure, true, and precious, as compared with that which suggested the landscape of the seventeenth century.

Now observe, how simple the whole subject becomes. You have, first, your great ancient landscape divided into its three periods—Giottesque, Leonardesque, Titianesque.

Then you have a great gap, full of nonentities and abortions; a gulf of foolishness, into the bottom of which you may throw Claude and Salvator, neither of them deserving to give a name to anything. Call it "pastoral" landscape, "guarda e passa," and then you have, lastly, the pure, wholesome, simple, modern landscape. You want a name for that: I will give you one in a moment; for the whole character and power of that landscape is originally based on the work of one man.

Joseph Mallord William Turner was born in Maiden Lane, London, about eighty years ago. The register of his birth was burned, and his age at his death could only be arrived at by conjecture. He was the son of a barber; and his father intended him, very properly, for his own profession. The bent of the boy was, however, soon manifested, as is always the case in children of extraordinary genius, too strongly to be resisted, and a sketch of a coat of arms on a silver salver, made while his father was shaving a customer, obtained for him, in reluctant compliance with the admiring customer's advice, the permission to follow art as a profession.

He had, of course, the usual difficulties of young artists to encounter, and they were then far greater than they are now. But Turner differed from most men in this,—that he was always willing to take anything to do that came in his way. He did not shut himself up in a garret to produce unsaleable works of "high art," and starve, or lose his senses. He hired himself out every evening to wash in skies in Indian ink, on other people's drawings, as many as he could, at half a crown a night, getting his supper into the bargain. "What could I have done better?" he said afterwards: "it was first-rate practice." Then he took to illustrating guide-books and almanacks, and anything that wanted cheap frontispieces. The Oxford Almanack, published on a single sheet, with a copper-plate at the top of it, consisting of a "View"—you perhaps, some of you, know the kind of print characteristic of the last century, under which the word "View" is always printed in large letters, with a dedication, obsequious to the very dust, to the Grand Signior of the neighbourhood.—Well, this Almanack had always such a view of some Oxford College at the top of it, dedicated, I think, always to the head of the College; and it owed this, its principal decoration, to Turner for many



years. I have myself two careful drawings of some old seals, made by him for a local book on the antiquities of Whalley Abbey. And there was hardly a gentleman's seat of any importance in England, towards the close of the last century, of which you will not find some rude engraving in the local publications of the time, inscribed with the simple name "W. Turner."

There was another great difference between Turner and other men. In doing these drawings for the commonest publications of the day, and for a remuneration altogether contemptible, he never did his work badly because he thought it beneath him, or because he was ill-paid. There does not exist such a thing as a slovenly drawing by Turner. With what people were willing to give him for his work he was content; but he considered that work in its relation to himself, not in its relation to the purchaser. He took a poor price, that he might *live*; but he made noble drawings, that he might *learn*. Of course some are slighter than others and they vary in their materials; those executed with pencil and Indian ink being never finished to the degree of those which are executed in colour. But he is *never* careless. According to the time and means at his disposal, he always did his best. He never let a drawing leave his hands without having made a step in advance, and having done better in it than he had ever done before; and there is no important drawing of the period which is not executed with a *total* disregard of time and price, and which was not, even then, worth four or five times what Turner received for it.

Even without genius, a man who thus felt and thus laboured was sure to do great things; though it is seldom that, without great genius, men either thus feel or thus labour. Turner was as far beyond all other men in intellect as in industry; and his advance in power and grasp of thought was as steady as the increasing light of sunrise.

His reputation was soon so far established that he was able to devote himself to more consistent study. He never appears literally to have *copied* any picture; but whenever any master interested him, or was of so established a reputation that he thought it necessary to study him, he painted pictures of his own subjects in the style of that master, until he felt himself able to rival his excellencies, whatever they were. There are thus multitudes of pictures by Turner, which are direct imitations of other masters; especially of

Claude, Wilson, Louthembourg, Gaspar Poussin, Vandewelde, Cuyp, and Rembrandt. It has been argued by Mr. Leslie that, because Turner thus in his early years imitated many of the old masters, therefore he must to the end of his life have considered them greater than himself. The *non-sequitur* is obvious. I trust there are few men so unhappy as never to have learned anything from their inferiors; and I fear there are few men so wise as never to have imitated anything but what was deserving of imitation. The young Turner, indeed, would have been more than mortal if, in a period utterly devoid of all healthy examples of landscape art, he had been able at once to see his way to the attainment of his ultimate ends; or if, seeing it, he had felt himself at once strong enough to defy the authority of every painter and connoisseur whose style had formed the taste of the public, or whose dicta directed their patronage.

But the period when he both felt and resolved to assert his own superiority was indicated with perfect clearness, by his publishing a series of engravings, which were nothing else than direct challenges to Claude—then the landscape painter supposed to be the greatest in the world—upon his own ground and his own terms. You are probably all aware that the studies made by Claude for his pictures, and kept by him under the name of the *Liber Veritatis*, were for the most part made with pen and ink, washed over with a brown tint; and that these drawings have been carefully facsimiled and published in the form of mezzotint engravings, long supposed to be models of taste in landscape composition. In order to provoke comparison between Claude and himself, Turner published a series of engravings, called the *Liber Studiorum*, executed in exactly the same manner as these drawings of Claude,—an etching representing what was done with the pen, while mezzotint stood for colour. You see the notable publicity of this challenge. Had he confined himself to *pictures* in his trial of skill with Claude, it would only have been in the gallery or the palace that the comparison could have been instituted; but now it is in the power of all who are interested in the matter to make it at their ease.\*

\* When this Lecture was delivered, an enlarged copy of a portion of one of these studies by Claude was set beside a similarly magnified portion of one by Turner. It was impossible, without much increasing the

Now, what Turner did in contest with Claude, he did with every other then-known master of landscape, each in his turn. He challenged and vanquished, each in his own peculiar field, Vandevelde on the sea, Salvator among rocks, and Cuyp on Lowland rivers; and, having done this, set himself to paint the natural scenery of skies, mountains, and lakes, which, until his time, had never been so much as attempted.

He thus, in the extent of his sphere, far surpassed even Titian and Leonardo, the great men of the earlier schools. In their foreground work neither Titian nor Leonardo *could* be excelled; but Titian and Leonardo were thoroughly conventional in all *but* their foregrounds. Turner was equally great in all the elements of landscape, and it is on him, and on his daring additions to the received schemes of landscape art, that all modern landscape has been founded. You will never meet any truly great living landscape painter who will not at once frankly confess his obligations to Turner, not, observe, as having copied him, but as having been led by Turner to look in Nature for what he would otherwise either not have discerned, or discerning, not have dared to represent.

Turner, therefore, was the first man who presented us with the *type* of perfect landscape art: and the richness of that art, with which you are at present surrounded, and which enables you to open your walls as it were into so many windows, through which you can see whatever has charmed you in the fairest scenery of your country, you will do well to remember as *Turneresque*.

So then you have these five periods to recollect—you will have no difficulty, I trust, in doing so,—the periods of Giotto, Leonardo, Titian, pastoralism, and Turner.

But Turner's work is yet only begun. His greatness is, as yet, altogether denied by many; and to the full, felt by very few. But every day that he lies in his grave will bring some new acknowledgment of his power; and through those eyes, now filled with dust, generations yet unborn will learn to behold the light of Nature.

cost of the publication, to prepare two mezzotint engravings with the care requisite for this purpose; and the portion of the Lecture relating to these examples is therefore omitted. It is however in the power of every reader to procure one or more plates of each series; and to judge for himself whether the conclusion of Turner's superiority, which is assumed in the next sentence of the text, be a just one or not.

You have some ground to-night to accuse me of dogmatism. I can bring no proof before you of what I so boldly assert. But I would not have accepted your invitation to address you, unless I had felt that I had a right to be, in this matter, dogmatic. I did not come here to tell you of my beliefs or my conjectures; I came to tell you the truth which I have given fifteen years of my life to ascertain, that this man, this Turner, of whom you have known so little while he was living among you, will one day take his place beside Shakespeare and Verulam, in the annals of the light of England.

Yes: beside Shakespeare and Verulam, a third star in that central constellation, round which, in the astronomy of intellect, all other stars make their circuit. By Shakespeare, humanity was unsealed to you; by Verulam the *principles* of Nature; and by Turner, her *aspect*. All these were sent to unlock one of the gates of light, and to unlock it for the first time. But of all the three, though not the greatest, Turner was the most unprecedented in his work. Bacon did what Aristotle had attempted; Shakespeare did perfectly what Æschylus did partially; but none before Turner had lifted the veil from the face of Nature; the majesty of the hills and forests had received no interpretation, and the clouds passed unrecorded from the face of the heaven which they adorned, and of the earth to which they ministered.

And now let me tell you something of his personal character. You have heard him spoken of as ill-natured, and jealous of his brother artists. I will tell you how jealous he was. I knew him for ten years, and during that time had much familiar intercourse with him. I *never once* heard him say an unkind thing of a brother artist, and I *never once heard him find a fault* with another man's work. I could say this of *no other* artist whom I have ever known.

But I will add a piece of evidence on this matter of peculiar force. Probably many here have read a book which has been lately published, to my mind one of extreme interest and value, the life of the unhappy artist, Benjamin Haydon. Whatever may have been his faults, I believe no person can read his journal without coming to the conclusion that his heart was honest, and that he does not *wilfully* misrepresent any fact, or any person. Even supposing otherwise, the expression I am going to quote

to you would have all the more force, because, as you know, Haydon passed his whole life in war with the Royal Academy, of which Turner was one of the most influential members. Yet in the midst of one of his most violent expressions of exultation at one of his victories over the Academy, he draws back suddenly with these words:—"But Turner behaved well, and did me justice."

I will give you however besides, two plain facts illustrative of Turner's "jealousy."

You have, perhaps not many of you, heard of a painter of the name of Bird: I do not myself know his works, but Turner saw some merit in them: and when Bird first sent a picture to the Academy, for exhibition, Turner was on the hanging committee. Bird's picture had great merit; but no place for it could be found. Turner pleaded hard for it. No, the thing was impossible. Turner sat down and looked at Bird's picture a long time; then insisted that a place must be found for it. He was still met by the assertion of impracticability. He said no more, but took down one of his own pictures, sent it out of the Academy, and hung Bird's in its place.

Match that, if you can, among the annals of hanging committees. But he could do nobler things than this.

When Turner's picture of Cologne was exhibited in the year 1826, it was hung between two portraits, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of Lady Wallscourt and Lady Robert Manners.

The sky of Turner's picture was exceedingly bright, and it had a most injurious effect on the colour of the two portraits. Lawrence naturally felt mortified, and complained openly of the position of his pictures. You are aware that artists were at that time permitted to retouch their pictures on the walls of the Academy. On the morning of the opening of the exhibition, at the private view, a friend of Turner's who had seen the Cologne in all its splendour, led a group of expectant critics up to the picture. He started back from it in consternation. The golden sky had changed to a dun colour. He ran up to Turner, who was in another part of the room. "Turner, *what* have you been doing to your picture?" "Oh," muttered Turner, in a low voice, "poor Lawrence was so unhappy. It's only lamp black. It'll all wash off after the exhibition!" He had actually passed a wash of lamp

black in water colour over the whole sky, and utterly spoiled his picture for the time, and so left it through the exhibition, lest it should hurt Lawrence's.

You may easily find instances of self-sacrifice where men have strong motives, and where large benefits are to be conferred by the effort, or general admiration obtained by it; but of pure, unselfish, and perfect generosity, showing itself in a matter of minor interest, and when few could be aware of the sacrifice made, you will not easily find such another example as this.

Thus much for his jealousy of his brother artists. You have also heard much of his niggardliness in money transactions. A great part of what you have heard is perfectly true, allowing for the exaggeration which always takes place in the accounts of an eccentric character. But there are other parts of Turner's conduct of which you have never heard; and which, if truly reported, would set his niggardliness in a very different light. Every person from whom Turner exacted a due shilling proclaimed the exaction far and wide; but the persons to whom Turner gave hundreds of pounds were prevented, by their "delicacy," from reporting the kindness of their benefactor. I may, however, perhaps, be permitted to acquaint you with one circumstance of this nature, creditable alike to both parties concerned.

At the death of a poor drawing master, Mr. Wells, whom Turner had long known, he was deeply affected, and lent money to the widow until a large sum had accumulated. She was both honest and grateful, and after a long period was happy enough to be able to return to her benefactor the whole sum she had received from him. She waited on him with it; but Turner kept his hands in his pocket. "Keep it," he said, "and send your children to school, and to church." He said this in bitterness; he had himself been sent to neither.

Well, but, you will answer to me, we have heard Turner all our lives stigmatised as brutal, and uncharitable, and selfish, and miserly. How are we to understand these opposing statements?

Easily. I have told you truly what Turner was. You have often heard what to most people he appeared to be. Imagine what it was for a man to live seventy years in this hard world, with the kindest heart, and the noblest intellect

of his time, and never to meet with a single word or ray of sympathy, until he felt himself sinking into the grave. From the time he knew his true greatness all the world was turned against him: he held his own; but it could not be without roughness of bearing, and hardening of the temper, if not of the heart. No one understood him, no one trusted him, and every one cried out against him. Imagine, any of you, the effect upon your own minds, if every voice that you heard from the human beings around you were raised, year after year, through all your lives, only in condemnation of your efforts and denial of your success. This may be borne, and borne easily, by men who have fixed religious principles, or supporting domestic ties. But Turner had no one to teach him in his youth, and no one to love him in his old age. Respect and affection, if they came at all, came unbelieved, or came too late. Naturally irritable, though kind,—naturally suspicious, though generous,—the gold gradually became dim, and the most fine gold changed, or if not changed, overcast and clouded. The deep heart was still beating, but it was beneath a dark and melancholy mail, between whose joints, however, sometimes the slightest arrows found entrance, and power of giving pain. He received no consolation in his last years, nor in his death. Cut off in great part from all society,—first by labour, and at last by sickness,—hunted to his grave by the malignities of small critics, and the jealousies of hopeless rivalry, he died in the house of a stranger,—one companion of his life, and one only, staying with him to the last. The window of his death-chamber was turned towards the west, and the *sun* shone upon his face in its setting, and rested there, as he expired.

## LECTURE IV

### PRE-RAPHAELITISM

THE subject on which I would desire to engage your attention this evening, is the nature and probable result of a certain schism which took place a few years ago among our British artists.

This schism, or rather the heresy which led to it, as you are probably aware, was introduced by a small number of very young men; and consists mainly in the assertion that the principles on which art has been taught for these three hundred years back are essentially wrong, and that the principles which ought to guide us are those which prevailed before the time of Raphael; in adopting which, therefore, as their guides, these young men, as a sort of bond of unity among themselves, took the unfortunate and somewhat ludicrous name of "Pre-Raphaelite" brethren.

You must also be aware that this heresy has been opposed with all the influence and all the bitterness of art and criticism; but that in spite of these the heresy has gained ground, and the pictures painted on these new principles have obtained a most extensive popularity. These circumstances are sufficiently singular, but their importance is greater even than their singularity; and your time will certainly not be wasted in devoting an hour to an inquiry into the true nature of this movement.

I shall first, therefore, endeavour to state to you what the real difference is between the principles of art before and after Raphael's time, and then to ascertain, with you, how far these young men truly have understood the difference, and what may be hoped or feared from the effort they are making.

First, then, What is the real difference between the principles on which art has been pursued before and since Raphael? You must be aware, that the principal ground on which the Pre-Raphaelites have been attacked, is the



charge that they wish to bring us back to a time of darkness and ignorance, when the principles of drawing, and of art in general, were comparatively unknown; and this attack, therefore, is entirely founded on the assumption that, although for some unaccountable reason we cannot at present produce artists altogether equal to Raphael, yet that we are on the whole in a state of greater illumination than, at all events, any artists who preceded Raphael; so that we consider ourselves entitled to look down upon them, and to say that, all things considered, they did some wonderful things for their time; but that, as for comparing the art of Giotto to that of Wilkie or Edwin Landseer, it would be perfectly ridiculous,—the one being a mere infant in his profession, and the others accomplished workmen.

Now, that this progress has in some things taken place is perfectly true; but it is true also that this progress is by no means the main thing to be noticed respecting ancient and modern art; that there are other circumstances, connected with the change from one to the other, immeasurably more important, and which, until very lately, have been altogether lost sight of.

The fact is, that modern art is not so much distinguished from old art by greater skill, as by a radical change in temper. The art of this day is not merely a more *knowing* art than that of the thirteenth century,—it is altogether another art. Between the two there is a great gulf, a distinction for ever ineffaceable. The change from one to the other was not that of the child into the man, as we usually consider it; it was that of the chrysalis into the butterfly. There was an entire change in the habits, food, method of existence, and heart of the whole creature. That we know more than thirteenth-century people is perfectly true; but that is not the essential difference between us and them. We are different kind of creatures from them,—as different as moths are different from caterpillars; and different in a certain broad and vast sense, which I shall try this evening to explain and prove to you;—different not merely in this or that result of minor circumstances,—not as you are different from people who never saw a locomotive engine, or a Highlander of this century from a Highlander of 1745;—different in a far broader and mightier sense than that, in a sense so great and clear, that we are enabled to separate all the Christian nations and tongues

of the early time from those of the latter time, and speak of them in one group as the kingdoms of the Middle Ages. There is an infinite significance in that term, which I want you to dwell upon and work out; it is a term which we use in a dim consciousness of the truth, but without fully penetrating into that of which we are conscious. I want to deepen and make clear to you this consciousness that the world has had essentially a Trinity of ages—the Classical Age, the Middle Age, the Modern Age; each of these embracing races and individuals of apparently enormous separation in kind, but united in the spirit of their age,—the Classical Age having its Egyptians and Ninevites, Greeks and Romans,—the Middle Age having its Goths and Franks, Lombards and Italians,—the Modern Ages having their French and English, Spaniards and Germans; but all these distinctions being in each case subordinate to the mightier and broader distinction, between *Classicalism*, *Mediævalism*, and *Modernism*.

Now our object to-night is indeed only to inquire into a matter of art; but we cannot do so properly until we consider this art in its relation to the inner spirit of the age in which it exists; and by doing so we shall not only arrive at the most just conclusions respecting our present subject, but we shall obtain the means of arriving at just conclusions respecting many other things.

Now the division of time which the Pre-Raphaelites have adopted, in choosing Raphael as the man whose works mark the separation between Mediævalism and Modernism, is perfectly accurate. It has been accepted as such by all their opponents.

You have, then, the three periods: Classicalism, extending to the fall of the Roman empire; Mediævalism, extending from that fall to the close of the fifteenth century; and Modernism, thenceforward to our days.

• And in examining into the spirit of these three epochs, observe, I don't mean to compare their bad men,—I don't mean to take Tiberius as a type of Classicalism, nor Ezzelin as a type of Mediævalism, nor Robespierre as a type of Modernism. Bad men are like each other in all epochs; and in the Roman, the Paduan, or the Parisian, sensuality and cruelty admit of little distinction in the manners of their manifestation. But among men comparatively virtuous, it is important to study the phases of character; and it is,

into these only that it is necessary for us to inquire. Consider therefore, first, the essential difference in character between three of the most devoted military heroes whom the three great epochs of the world have produced,—all three devoted to the service of their country,—all of them dying therein. I mean, Leonidas in the Classical period, St. Louis in the Mediæval period, and Lord Nelson in the Modern period.

Leonidas had the most rigid sense of duty, and died with the most perfect faith in the gods of his country, fulfilling the accepted prophecy of his death. St. Louis had the most rigid sense of duty, and the most perfect faith in Christ. Nelson had the most rigid sense of duty, and——

You must supply my pause with your charity.

Now you do not suppose that the main difference between Leonidas and Nelson lay in the modern inventions at the command of the one, as compared with the imperfect military instruments possessed by the other. They were not essentially different, in that the one fought with lances and the other with guns. But they were essentially different in the whole tone of their religious belief.

By this instance you may be partially prepared for the bold statement I am going to make to you, as to the change which constitutes modernism. I said just now that it was like that of the worm to the butterfly. But the changes which God causes in his lower creatures are almost always from worse to better, while the changes which God allows man to make in himself are very often quite the other way; like Adam's new arrangement of his nature. And in saying that this last change was like that of a chrysalis, I meant only in the completeness of it, not in the tendency of it. Instead of from the worm to the butterfly, it is very possible it may have been from the butterfly to the worm.

Have patience with me for a moment after I tell you what I believe it to have been, and give me a little time to justify my words.

I say that Classicalism began, wherever civilisation began, with Pagan Faith. Mediævalism began, and continued, wherever civilisation began and continued to *confess* Christ. And, lastly, Modernism began and continues, wherever civilisation began and continues to *deny* Christ.

You are startled, but give me a moment to explain.

What, you would say to me, do you mean to tell us that *we* deny Christ? we who are essentially modern in every one of our principles and feelings, and yet all of us professing believers in Christ, and we trust most of us true ones? I answer, So far as we are believers indeed, we are one with the faithful of all times,—one with the classical believer of Athens and Ephesus, and one with the mediæval believer of the banks of the Rhone and the valleys of the Monte Viso. But so far as, in various strange ways, some in great and some in small things, we deny this belief, in so far we are essentially infected with this spirit, which I call modernism.

For observe, the change of which I speak has nothing whatever to do with the Reformation, or with any of its effects. It is a far broader thing than the Reformation. It is a change which has taken place, not only in reformed England, and reformed Scotland; but in unreformed France, in unreformed Italy, in unreformed Austria. I class honest Protestants and honest Roman Catholics for the present together, under the general term Christians: if you object to their being so classed together, I pray your pardon, but allow me to do so at present, for the sake of perspicuity, if for nothing else; and so classing them, I say that a change took place, about the time of Raphael, in the spirit of Roman Catholics and Protestants both; and that change consisted in the *denial* of their religious belief, at least in the external and trivial affairs of life, and often in far more serious things.

For instance, hear this direction to an upholsterer of the early thirteenth century. Under the commands of the sheriff of Wiltshire, he is thus ordered to make some alterations in a room for Henry the Third. He is to “wainscot the King’s lower chamber, and to paint that wainscot of a green colour, and to put a border to it, and to cause the heads of kings and queens to be painted on the borders; and to paint on the walls of the King’s upper chamber the story of St. Margaret, Virgin, and the four Evangelists, and to paint the wainscot of the same chamber of a green colour, spotted with gold.” \*

Again, the sheriff of Wiltshire is ordered to “put two small glass windows in the chamber of Edward the King’s

\* Liberate Rolls, preserved in the Tower of London, and quoted by Mr. Turner in his *History of the Domestic Architecture of England*.

son; and put a glass window in the chamber of our Queen at Clarendon; and in the same window cause to be painted a Mary with her Child, and at the feet of the said Mary, a queen with clasped hands."

Again, the sheriff of Southampton is ordered to "paint the tablet beside the King's bed, with the figures of the guards of the bed of Solomon, and to glaze with white glass the windows in the King's great Hall at Northampton, and cause the history of Lazarus and Dives to be painted in the same."

And so on; I need not multiply instances. You see that in all these cases, the furniture of the King's house is made to confess his Christianity. It may be imperfect and impure Christianity, but such as it might be, it was all that men had then to live and die by; and you see there was not a pane of glass in their windows, nor a pallet by their bedside that did not confess and proclaim it. Now, when you go home to your own rooms, supposing them to be richly decorated at all, examine what that decoration consists of. You will find Cupids, Graces, Floras, Dianas, Jupiters, Junos. But you will not find, except in the form of an engraving, bought principally for its artistic beauty, either Christ, or the Virgin, or Lazarus and Dives. And if a thousand years hence, any curious investigator were to dig up the ruins of Edinburgh, and not know your history, he would think you had all been born heathens. Now that, so far as it goes, is denying Christ; it is pure Modernism.

No, you will answer me, "you misunderstand and calumniate us. We do not, indeed, choose to have Dives and Lazarus on our windows; but that is not because we are moderns, but because we are Protestants, and do not like religious imagery." Pardon me: that is not the reason. Go into any fashionable lady's boudoir in Paris, and see if you will find Dives and Lazarus there. You will find, indeed, either that she has her private chapel, or that she has a crucifix in her dressing-room; but for the general decoration of the house, it is all composed of Apollos and Muses, just as it is here.

Again. What do you suppose was the substance of good education, the education of a knight, in the Middle Ages? What was taught to a boy as soon as he was able to learn anything? First, to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection and perfect strength; then to take Christ for his

captain, to live as always in his presence and, finally, to do his *devoir*—mark the word—to all men? Now, consider first, the difference in their influence over the armies of France, between the ancient word “*devoir*” and modern word “*gloire*.” And, again, ask yourselves what you expect your own children to be taught at your great schools and universities. Is it Christian history, or the histories of Pan and Silenus? Your present education, to all intents and purposes, denies Christ, and that is intensely and peculiarly modernism.

Or, again, what do you suppose was the proclaimed and understood principle of all Christian *governments* in the Middle Ages? I do not say it was a principle acted up to, or that the cunning and violence of wicked men had not too often their full sway then, as now; but on what principles were that cunning and violence, so far as was possible, restrained? By the *confessed* fear of God, and *confessed* authority of his law. You will find that all treaties, laws, transactions whatsoever, in the Middle Ages, are based on a confession of Christianity as the leading rule of life; that a text of Scripture is held, in all public assemblies, strong enough to be set against an appearance of expediency; and although, in the end, the expediency might triumph, yet it was never without a distinct allowance of Christian principle, as an efficient element in the consultation. Whatever error might be committed, at least Christ was openly confessed. Now what is the custom of your British Parliament in these days? You know that nothing would excite greater manifestations of contempt and disgust than the slightest attempt to introduce the authority of Scripture in a political consultation. That is denying Christ. It is intensely and peculiarly modernism.

It would be easy to go on showing you this same thing in many more instances; but my business to-night is to show you its full effect in one thing only, namely, in art, and I must come straightway to that, as I have little enough time. This, then, is the great and broad fact which distinguishes modern art from old art; that all ancient art was *religious*, and all modern art is *profane*. Once more, your patience for an instant. I say, all ancient art was religious; that is to say, religion was its first object; private luxury or pleasure its second. I say, all modern art is profane; that is, private luxury or pleasure is its first

object; religion its second. Now you all know, that anything which makes religion its second object, makes religion *no* object. God will put up with a great many things in the human heart, but there is one thing he will *not* put up with in it—a second place. He who offers God a second place, offers him no place. And there is another mighty truth which you all know, that he who makes religion his first object, makes it his whole object: he has no other work in the world than God's work. Therefore I do not say that ancient art was *more* religious than modern art. There is no question of degree in this matter. Ancient art was religious art; modern art is profane art; and between the two the distinction is as firm as between light and darkness.

Now, do not let what I say be encumbered in your minds with the objection, that you think art ought not to be brought into the service of religion. That is not the question at present—do not agitate it. The simple fact is, that old art *was* brought into that service, and received therein a peculiar form; that modern art is *not* brought into that service, and has received in consequence another form; that this is the great distinction between mediæval and modern art; and from that are clearly deducible all other essential differences between them. That is the point I wish to show you, and of that there can be no dispute. Whether or not Christianity be the purer for lacking the service of art, is disputable—and I do not mean now to begin the dispute; but that art is the *impurer* for not being in the service of Christianity, is indisputable, and that is the main point I have now to do with.

Perhaps there are some of you here who would not allow that the religion of the thirteenth century was Christianity. Be it so, still is the statement true, which is all that is necessary for me now to prove, that art was great because it was devoted to such religion as then existed. Grant that Roman Catholicism was not Christianity—grant it, if you will, to be the same thing as old heathenism,—and still I say to you, whatever it was, men lived and died by it, the ruling thought of all their thoughts; and just as classical art was greatest in building to its gods, so mediæval art was great in building to its gods, and modern art is not great, because it builds to *no* God. You have for instance, in your Edinburgh Library, a Bible of the thirteenth century, the

Latin Bible, commonly known as the Vulgate. It contains the Old and New Testaments, complete, besides the books of Maccabees, the Wisdom of Solomon, the books of Judith, Baruch, and Tobit. The whole is written in the most beautiful black-letter hand, and each book begins with an illuminated letter, containing three or four figures, illustrative of the book which it begins. Now, whether this were done in the service of true Christianity or not, the simple fact is, that here is a man's lifetime taken up in writing and ornamenting a Bible, as the sole end of his art; and that doing this either in a book, or on a wall, was the common artist's life at the time; that the constant Bible reading and Bible thinking which this work involved, made a man serious and thoughtful, and a good workman, because he was always expressing those feelings which, whether right or wrong, were the groundwork of his whole being. Now, about the year 1500, this entire system was changed. Instead of the life of Christ, men had, for the most part, to paint the lives of Bacchus and Venus; and if you walk through any public gallery of pictures by the "great masters," as they are called, you will indeed find here and there what is called a Holy Family, painted for the sake of drawing pretty children, or a pretty woman; but for the most part you will find nothing but Floras, Pomonas, Satyrs, Graces, Bacchanals, and Banditti. Now you will not declare—you cannot believe,—that Angelico painting the life of Christ, Benozzo painting the life of Abraham, Ghirlandajo painting the life of the Virgin, Giotto painting the life of St. Francis, were worse employed or likely to produce a less healthy art, than Titian painting the loves of Venus and Adonis, than Correggio painting the naked Antiope, than Salvator painting the slaughters of the thirty years' war? If you will not let me call the one kind of labour Christian, and the other unchristian, at least you will let me call the one moral, and the other immoral, and that is all I ask you to admit.

Now observe, hitherto, I have been telling you what you may feel inclined to doubt or dispute; and I must leave you to consider the subject at your leisure. But henceforward I tell you plain facts, which admit neither of doubt nor dispute by any one who will take the pains to acquaint himself with their subject-matter.

When the entire purpose of art was moral teaching, it naturally took truth for its first object, and beauty, and



the pleasure resulting from beauty, only for its second. But when it lost all purpose of moral teaching, it as naturally took beauty for its first object, and truth for its second.

That is to say, in all they did, the old artists endeavoured, in one way or another, to express the real facts of the subject or event, this being their chief business: and the question they first asked themselves was always, how would this thing, or that, actually have occurred? what would this person, or that, have done under the circumstances? and then, having formed their conception, they work it out with only a secondary regard to grace, or beauty, while a modern painter invariably thinks of the grace and beauty of his work first, and unites afterwards as much truth as he can with its conventional graces. I will give you a single strong instance to make my meaning plainer. In Orcagna's great fresco of the *Triumph of Death*, one of the incidents is that three kings,\* when out hunting, are met by a spirit, which, desiring them to follow it, leads them to a churchyard, and points out to them, in open coffins, three bodies of kings such as themselves, in the last stage of corruption. Now a modern artist, representing this, would have endeavoured dimly and faintly to suggest the appearance of the dead bodies, and would have made, or attempted to make, the countenances of the three kings variously and solemnly expressive of thought. This would be in his, or our, view, a poetical and tasteful treatment of the subject. But Orcagna disdains both poetry and taste; he wants the *facts* only; he wishes to give the spectator the same lesson that

\* This incident is not of Orcagna's invention, it is variously represented in much earlier art. There is a curious and graphic drawing of it, *circa* 1300, in the MS. Arundel 83 Brit. Mus., in which the three dead persons are walking, and are met by three queens, who severally utter the sentences,

“Ich am aferd.”

“Lo, whet ich se?”

“Me thinketh hit both develes thre.”

To which the dead bodies answer:—

“Ich wes wel fair.”

“Such schelt ou be.”

“For Godes love, be wer by me.”

It is curious, that though the dresses of the living persons, and the “I was well fair” of the first dead speaker, seem to mark them distinctly to be women, some longer legends below are headed “*primus rex mortuus*,” etc.

the kings had; and therefore, instead of concealing the dead bodies, he paints them with the most fearful detail. And then, he does not consider what the three kings might most gracefully do. He considers only what they actually in all probability *would have done*. He makes them looking at the coffins with a startled stare, and one holding his nose. This is an extreme instance; but you are not to suppose it is because Orcagna had naturally a coarse or prosaic mind. Where he felt that thoughtfulness and beauty could properly be introduced, as in his circles of saints and prophets, no painter of the Middle Ages is so grand. I can give you no better proof of this, than the one fact that Michael Angelo borrowed from him openly,—borrowed from him in the principal work which he ever executed, the *Last Judgment*, and borrowed from him the principal figure in that work. But it is just because Orcagna was so firmly and unscrupulously true, that he had the power of being so great when he chose. His arrow went straight to the mark. It was not that he did not love beauty, but he loved truth first.

So it was with all the men of that time. No painters ever had more power of conceiving graceful form, or more profound devotion to the beautiful; but all these gifts and affections are kept sternly subordinate to their moral purpose; and, so far as their powers and knowledge went, they either painted from Nature things as they were, or from imagination things as they must have been.

I do not mean that they reached any imitative resemblance to Nature. They had neither skill to do it, nor care to do it. Their art was conventional and imperfect, but they considered it only as a language wherein to convey the knowledge of certain facts; it was perfect enough for that; and though always reaching on to greater attainments, they never suffered their imperfections to disturb and check them in their immediate purposes. And this mode of treating all subjects was persisted in by the greatest men until the close of the fifteenth century.

Now so justly have the Pre-Raphaelites chosen their time and name, that the great change which clouds the career of mediæval art was effected, not only in Raphael's time, but by Raphael's own practice, and by his practice in the *very centre of his available life*.

You remember, doubtless, what high ground we have

for placing the beginning of human intellectual strength at about the age of twelve years.\* Assume, therefore, this period for the beginning of Raphael's strength. He died at thirty-seven. And in his twenty-fifth year, one half-year only past the precise centre of his available life, he was sent for to Rome, to decorate the Vatican for Pope Julius II., and having until that time worked exclusively in the ancient and stern mediæval manner, he, in the first chamber which he decorated in that palace, wrote upon its walls the *Mene, Tekel, Upharsin*, of the arts of Christianity.

And he wrote it thus: On one wall of that chamber he placed a picture of the World or Kingdom of *Theology*, presided over by *Christ*. And on the side walls of that same chamber he placed the World or Kingdom of *Poetry*, presided over by *Apollo*. And from that spot, and from that hour, the intellect and the art of Italy date their degradation.

Observe, however, the significance of this fact is not in the mere use of the figure of the heathen god to indicate the domain of poetry. Such a symbolical use had been made of the figures of heathen deities in the best times of Christian art. But it is in the fact, that being called to Rome especially to adorn the palace of the so-called head of the Church, and called as the chief representative of the Christian artists of his time, Raphael had neither religion nor originality enough to trace the spirit of poetry and the spirit of philosophy to the inspiration of the true God, as well as that of theology; but that, on the contrary, *he elevated the creations of fancy on the one wall, to the same rank as the objects of faith upon the other*; that in deliberate, balanced, opposition to the Rock of the Mount Zion, he reared the rock of Parnassus, and the rock of the Acropolis; that, among the masters of poetry we find him enthroning Petrarch and Pindar, but not Isaiah nor David, and for lords over the domain of philosophy we find the masters of the school of Athens, but neither of those greater masters by the last of whom that school was rebuked,—those who received their wisdom from heaven itself, in the vision of Gibeon,† and the lightning of Damascus.

The doom of the arts of Europe went forth from that chamber, and it was brought about in great part by the very excellencies of the man who had thus marked the

\* Luke ii. 42, 49.

† 1 Kings iii. 5.

commencement of decline. The perfection of execution and the beauty of feature which were attained in his works, and in those of his great contemporaries, rendered finish of execution and beauty of form the chief objects of all artists; and thenceforward execution was looked for rather than thought, and beauty rather than veracity.

And as I told you, these are the two secondary causes of the decline of art; the first being the loss of moral purpose. Pray note them clearly. In mediæval art, thought is the first thing, execution the second; in modern art execution is the first thing, and thought the second. And again, in mediæval art, truth is first, beauty second; in modern art, beauty is first, truth second. The mediæval principles led *up* to Raphael, and the modern principles lead *down* from him.

Now, first, let me give you a familiar illustration of the difference with respect to execution. Suppose you have to teach two children drawing, one thoroughly clever and active-minded, the other dull and slow; and you put before them Jullien's chalk studies of heads—*études à deux crayons*—and desire them to be copied. The dull child will slowly do your bidding, blacken his paper and rub it white again, and patiently and painfully, in the course of three or four years, attain to the performance of a chalk head, not much worse than his original, but still of less value than the paper it is drawn upon. But the clever child will not, or will only by force, consent to this discipline. He finds other means of expressing himself with his pencil somehow or another; and presently you find his paper covered with sketches of his grandfather and grandmother, and uncles, and cousins, —sketches of the room, and the house, and the cat, and the dog, and the country outside, and everything in the world he can set his eyes on; and he gets on, and even his child's work has a value in it—a truth which makes it worth keeping; no one knows how precious, perhaps, that portrait of his grandfather may be, if any one has but the sense to keep it till the time when the old man can be seen no more up the lawn, nor by the wood. That child is working in the Middle-Age spirit—the other in the modern spirit.

But there is something still more striking in the evils which have resulted from the modern regardlessness of truth. Consider, for instance, its effect on what is called historical painting. What do you at present *mean* by

historical painting? Nowadays, it means the endeavouring, by the power of imagination, to portray some historical event of past days. But in the Middle Ages, it meant representing the acts of *their own* days; and that is the only historical painting worth a straw. Of all the wastes of time and sense which modernism has invented—and they are many—none are so ridiculous as this endeavour to represent past history. What do you suppose our descendants will care for our imaginations of the events of former days? Suppose the Greeks, instead of representing their own warriors as they fought at Marathon, had left us nothing but their imaginations of Egyptian battles; and suppose the Italians, in like manner, instead of portraits of Can Grande and Dante, or of Leo the Tenth and Raphael, had left us nothing but imaginary portraits of Pericles and Miltiades? What fools we should have thought them! how bitterly we should have been provoked with their folly! And that is precisely what our descendants will feel towards us, so far as our grand historical and classical schools are concerned. What do we care, they will say, what those nineteenth century people fancied about Greek and Roman history! If they had left us a few plain and rational sculptures and pictures of their own battles, and their own men, in their everyday dress, we should have thanked them. Well, but, you will say, we *have* left them portraits of our great men, and paintings of our great battles. Yes, you have indeed, and that is the only historical painting that you either have, or can have; but you don't *call* that historical painting. You don't thank the men who do it; you look down upon them and dissuade them from it, and tell them they don't belong to the grand schools. And yet they are the only true historical painters, and the only men who will produce any effect on their own generation, or on any other. Wilkie was an historical painter, Chantrey an historical sculptor, because they painted, or carved, the veritable things and men they saw, not men and things as they believed they might have been, or should have been. But no one tells such men they are historical painters, and they are discontented with what they do; and poor Wilkie must needs travel to see the grand school, and imitate the grand school, and ruin himself. And you have had multitudes of other painters ruined, from the beginning, by that grand school. There was Etty, naturally as good a painter as ever lived,

but no one told him what to paint, and he studied the antique, and the grand schools, and painted dances of nymphs in red and yellow shawls to the end of his days. Much good may they do you! He is gone to the grave, a lost mind. There was Flaxman, another naturally great man, with as true an eye for Nature as Raphael,—he stumbles over the blocks of the antique statues—wanders in the dark valley of their ruins to the end of his days. He has left you a few outlines of muscular men straddling and frowning behind round shields. Much good may they do you! Another lost mind! And of those who are lost namelessly, who have not strength enough even to make themselves known, the poor pale students who lie buried for ever in the abysses of the great schools, no account can be rendered; they are numberless.

And the wonderful thing is, that of all these men whom you now have come to call the great masters, there was *not one* who confessedly did not paint his own present world, plainly and truly. Homer sang of what he saw; Phidias carved what he saw; Raphael painted the men of his own time in their own caps and mantles; and every man who has arisen to eminence in modern times has done so altogether by his working in their way, and doing the things he saw. How did Reynolds rise? Not by painting Greek women, but by painting the glorious little living ladies this, and ladies that, of his own time. How did Hogarth rise? Not by painting Athenian follies, but London follies. Who are the men who have made an impression upon you yourselves,—upon your own age? I suppose the most popular painter of the day is Landseer. Do you suppose he studied dogs and eagles out of the Elgin marbles? And yet in the very face of these plain, incontrovertible, all-visible facts, we go on from year to year with the base system of Academy teaching, in spite of which every one of these men have risen: I say *in spite* of the entire method and aim of our art-teaching. It destroys the greater number of its pupils altogether; it hinders and paralyses the greatest. There is not a living painter whose eminence is not in spite of everything he has been taught from his youth upwards, and who, whatever his eminence may be, has not suffered much injury in the course of his victory. For observe: this love of what is called ideality or beauty in preference to truth, operates not only in making us choose the past

rather than the present for our subjects, but it makes us falsify the present when we do take it for our subject. I said just now that portrait-painters were historical painters;—so they are; but not good ones, because not faithful ones. The beginning and end of modern portraiture is adulation. The painters cannot live but by flattery; we should desert them if they spoke honestly. And therefore we can have no good portraiture; for in the striving after that which is *not* in their model, they lose the inner and deeper nobleness which *is* in their model. I saw not long ago, for the first time, the portrait of a man whom I knew well,—a young man, but a religious man,—and one who had suffered much from sickness. The whole dignity of his features and person depended upon the expression of serene, yet solemn, purpose sustaining a feeble frame; and the painter, by way of flattering him, strengthened him, and made him athletic in body, gay in countenance, idle in gesture; and the whole power and being of the man himself were lost. and this is still more the case with our public portraits. You have a portrait, for instance, of the Duke of Wellington at the end of the North Bridge,—one of the thousand equestrian statues of Modernism,—studied from the show-riders of the amphitheatre, with their horses on their hind-legs in the sawdust.\* Do you suppose that was the way the Duke sat when your destinies depended on him? when the foam hung from the lips of his tired horse, and its wet limbs were dashed with the bloody slime of the battle-field,

\* I intended this last sentence of course to apply to the thousand statues, not definitely to the one in immediate question, which, though tainted with the modern affectation, and the nearest example of it to which I could refer an Edinburgh audience, is the work of a most promising sculptor; and was indeed so far executed on the principles asserted in the text, that the Duke gave Mr. Steele a sitting on horseback, in order that his mode of riding might be accurately represented. This, however, does not render the following remarks in the text nugatory as it may easily be imagined that the action of the Duke, exhibiting his riding in his own grounds, would be different from his action, or inaction, when watching the course of a battle.

I must also make a most definite exception in favour of Marochetti, who seems to me a thoroughly great sculptor; and whose statue of Cœur de Lion, though, according to the principle just stated, not to be considered an *historical* work, is an *ideal* work of the highest beauty and value. Its erection in front of Westminster Hall will tend more to educate the public eye and mind with respect to art, than anything we have done in London for centuries.

\*      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*      \*

• April 21st.—I stop the press in order to insert the following paragraph

and he himself sat anxious in his quietness, grieved in his fearlessness, as he watched, scythe-stroke by scythe-stroke, the gathering in of the harvest of death? You would have done something had you thus left his image in the enduring iron, but nothing now.

But the time has at last come for all this to be put an end to; and nothing can well be more extraordinary than the way in which the men have risen who are to do it. Pupils in the same schools, receiving precisely the same instruction which for so long a time has paralysed every one of our painters,—these boys agree in disliking to copy the antique statues set before them. They copy them as they are bid, and they copy them better than any one else; they carry off prize after prize, and yet they hate their work. At last they are admitted to study from the life; they find the life very different from the antique, and say so. Their teachers tell them the antique is the best, and they mustn't copy the life. They agree among themselves that they like the life, and that copy it they will. They do copy it faithfully, and their masters forthwith declare them to be lost men. Their fellow-students hiss them whenever they enter the room. They can't help it; they join hands and tacitly resist both the hissing and the instruction. Accidentally, a few prints of the works of Giotto, a few casts from those of Ghiberti, fall into their hands, and they see in these something they never saw before—something intensely and everlastingly true. They examine farther into the matter; they discover for themselves the greater part of what I have laid before you to-night; they form themselves into a body, and enter upon that crusade which has hitherto been victorious. And which will be absolutely and triumphantly victorious. The great mistake which has hitherto prevented the public mind from fully going with them must soon be corrected. That mistake was the supposition that, instead of wishing to recur to the *principles* of the early ages, these men wished to bring back the *ignorance* of the early ages. This notion,

from to-day's *Times*.:—"THE STATUE OF CŒUR DE LION.—Yesterday morning a number of workmen were engaged in pulling down the cast which was placed in New Palace Yard of the colossal equestrian statue of Richard Cœur de Lion. Sir C. Barry was, we believe, opposed to the cast remaining there any longer, and to the putting up of the statue itself on the same site, because it did not harmonise with the building. During the day the horse and figure were removed, and before night the pedestal was demolished and taken away."



grounded first on some hardness in their earlier works, which resulted—as it must always result—from the downright and earnest effort to paint Nature as in a looking-glass, was fostered partly by the jealousy of their beaten competitors, and partly by the pure, perverse, and hopeless ignorance of the whole body of art-critics, so called, connected with the press. No notion was ever more baseless or more ridiculous. It was asserted that the Pre-Raphaelites did not draw well, in the face of the fact, that the principal member of their body, from the time he entered the schools of the Academy, had literally encumbered himself with the medals, given as prizes for drawing. It was asserted that they did not draw in perspective, by men who themselves knew no more of perspective than they did of astrology; it was asserted that they sinned against the appearances of Nature, by men who had never drawn so much as a leaf or a blossom from Nature in their lives. And, lastly, when all these calumnies or absurdities would tell no more, and it began to be forced upon men's unwilling belief that the style of the Pre-Raphaelites *was* true and was according to Nature, the last forgery invented respecting them is, that they copy photographs. You observe how completely this last piece of malice defeats all the rest. It admits they are true to Nature, though only that it may deprive them of all merit in being so. But it may itself be at once refuted by the bold challenge to their opponents to produce a Pre-Raphaelite picture, or anything like one, by themselves copying a photograph.

Let me at once clear your minds from all these doubts, and at once contradict all these calumnies.

Pre-Raphaelitism has but one principle, that of absolute, uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything down to the most minute detail, from Nature, and from Nature only.\* Every Pre-Raphaelite landscape background is painted to the last touch, in the open air, from the thing itself. Every Pre-Raphaelite figure, however studied in expression, is a true portrait of some living

\* Or, where imagination is necessarily trusted to, by always endeavouring to conceive a fact as it really was likely to have happened, rather than as it most prettily *might* have happened. The various members of the school are not all equally severe in carrying out its principles, some of them trusting their memory or fancy very far; only all agreeing in the effort to make their memories so accurate as to seem like portraiture, and their fancy so probable as to seem like memory.

person.\* Every minute accessory is painted in the same manner. And one of the chief reasons for the violent opposition with which the school has been attacked by other artists, is the enormous cost of care and labour which such a system demands from those who adopt it, in contradistinction to the present slovenly and imperfect style.

This is the main Pre-Raphaelite principle. But the battle which its supporters have to fight is a hard one; and for that battle they have been fitted by a very peculiar character.

You perceive that the principal resistance they have to make is to that spurious beauty, whose attractiveness had tempted men to forget, or to despise, the more noble quality of sincerity: and in order at once to put them beyond the power of temptation from this beauty, they are, as a body, characterised by a total absence of sensibility to the ordinary and popular forms of artistic gracefulness; while, to all that still lower kind of prettiness, which regulates the disposition of our scenes upon the stage, and which appears in our lower art, as in our annuals, our commonplace portraits, and statuary, the Pre-Raphaelites are not only dead, but they regard it with a contempt and aversion approaching to disgust. This character is absolutely necessary to them in the present time; but it, of course, occasionally renders their work comparatively unpleasing. As the school becomes less aggressive, and more authoritative,—which it will do,—they will enlist into their ranks men who will work, mainly, upon their principles, and yet embrace more of those characters which are generally attractive, and this great ground of offence will be removed.

Again: you observe that, as landscape painters, their principles must, in great part, confine them to mere foreground work; and singularly enough, that they may not be tempted away from this work, they have been born with comparatively little enjoyment of those evanescent effects and distant sublimities which nothing but the memory can arrest, and nothing but a daring conventionalism portray. But for this work they are not needed. Turner had done it before them; he, though his capacity embraced everything, and though he would sometimes, in his foregrounds, paint the spots upon a dead trout, and the dyes upon a butterfly's wing, yet for the most part delighting to begin at that very point where Pre-Raphaelitism becomes powerless.

Lastly. The habit of constantly carrying everything up to the utmost point of completion deadens the Pre-Raphaelites in general to the merits of men who, with an equal love of truth up to a certain point, yet express themselves habitually with speed and power, rather than with finish, and give abstracts of truth rather than total truth. Probably to the end of time artists will more or less be divided into these classes, and it will be impossible to make men like Millais understand the merits of men like Tintoret; but this is the more to be regretted because the Pre-Raphaelites have enormous powers of imagination, as well as of realisation, and do not yet themselves know of how much they would be capable, if they sometimes worked on a larger scale, and with a less laborious finish.

With all their faults, their pictures are, since Turner's death, the best—incomparably the best—on the walls of the Royal Academy; and such works as Mr. Hunt's *Claudio* and *Isabella* have never been rivalled, in some respects never approached, at any other period of art.

This I believe to be a most candid statement of all their faults and all their deficiencies; not such, you perceive, as are likely to arrest their progress. The “*magna est veritas*” was never more sure of accomplishment than by these men. Their adversaries have no chance with them. They will gradually unite their influence with whatever is true or powerful in the reactionary art of other countries; and on their works such a school will be founded as shall justify the third age of the world's civilisation, and render it as great in creation as it has been in discovery.

And now let me remind you but of one thing more. As you examine into the career of historical painting, you will be more and more struck with the fact I have this evening stated to you,—that none was ever truly great but that which represented the living forms and daily deeds of the people among whom it arose;—that all precious historical work records, not the past, but the present. Remember, therefore, that it is not so much in *buying* pictures, as in *being* pictures, that you can encourage a noble school. The best patronage of art is not that which seeks for the pleasures of sentiment in a vague ideality, nor for beauty of form in a marble image; but that which educates your children into living heroes, and binds down the flights and the fondnesses of the heart into practical duty and faithful devotion.

## ADDENDA TO THE FOURTH LECTURE

I COULD not enter, in a popular lecture, upon one intricate and difficult question, closely connected with the subject of Pre-Raphaelitism—namely, the relation of invention to observation; and composition to imitation. It is still less a question to be discussed in the compass of a note; and I must defer all careful examination of it to a future opportunity. Nevertheless, it is impossible to leave altogether unanswered the first objection which is now most commonly made to the Pre-Raphaelite work, namely, that the principle of it seems adverse to all exertion of imaginative power. Indeed, such an objection sounds strangely on the lips of a public who have been in the habit of purchasing, for hundreds of pounds, small squares of Dutch canvas, containing only servile imitations of the coarsest nature. It is strange that an imitation of a cow's head by Paul Potter, or of an old woman's by Ostade, or of a scene of tavern debauchery by Teniers, should be purchased and proclaimed for high art, while the rendering of the most noble expressions of human feeling in Hunt's *Isabella*, or of the loveliest English landscape, haunted by sorrow, in Millais' *Ophelia*, should be declared "puerile." But, strange though the utterance of it be, there is some weight in the objection. It is true that so long as the Pre-Raphaelites only paint from Nature, however carefully selected and grouped, their pictures can never have the characters of the highest class of compositions. But, on the other hand, the shallow and conventional arrangements commonly called "compositions" by the artists of the present day, are infinitely farther from great art than the most patient work of the Pre-Raphaelites. That work is, even in its humblest form, a secure foundation, capable of infinite superstructure; a reality of true value, as far as it reaches, while the common artistical effects and groupings are a vain effort at superstructure without foundation—utter negation and fallacy from beginning to end. But,

more than this, the very faithfulness of the Pre-Raphaelites arises from the redundance of their imaginative power. Not only can all the members of the school compose a thousand times better than the men who pretend to look down upon them, but I question whether even the greatest men of old times possessed more exhaustless invention than either Millais or Rossetti; and it is partly the very ease with which they invent, which leads them to despise invention. Men who have no imagination, but have learned merely to produce a spurious resemblance of its results by the recipes of composition, are apt to value themselves mightily on their concoctive science; but the man whose mind a thousand living imaginations haunt, every hour, is apt to care too little for them; and to long for the perfect truth which he finds is not to be come at so easily. And though I may perhaps hesitatingly admit that it is possible to love this truth of reality too intensely, yet I have no hesitation in declaring that there is *no hope* for those who despise it, and that the painter, whoever he be, who despises the pictures already produced by the Pre-Raphaelites, has himself no capacity of becoming a great painter of any kind. Paul Veronese and Tintoret themselves, without desiring to imitate the Pre-Raphaelite work, would have looked upon it with deep respect, as John Bellini looked on that of Albert Durer; none but the ignorant could be unconscious of its truth, and none but the insincere regardless of it. How far it is possible for men educated on the severest Pre-Raphaelite principles to advance from their present style into that of the great schools of composition, I do not care to inquire, for at this period such an advance is certainly not desirable. Of great compositions we have enough, and more than enough, and it would be well for the world if it were willing to take some care of those it has. Of pure and manly truth, of stern statement of the things done and seen around us daily, we have hitherto had nothing. And in art, as in all other things, besides the literature of which it speaks, that sentence of Carlyle is inevitably and irreversibly true:—"Day after day, looking at the high destinies which yet await literature, which literature will ere long address herself with more decisiveness than ever to fulfil, it grows clearer to us that the proper task of literature lies 'n the domain of BELIEF, within which, poetic fiction, as 't is charitably named, will have to take a quite new figure,

if allowed a settlement there. Whereby were it not reasonable to prophesy that this exceeding great multitude of novel writers and such like, must, in a new generation, gradually do one of two things, either retire into nurseries, and work for children, minors, and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes, or else, what were far better, sweep their novel-fabric into the dust cart, and betake them, with such faculty as they have, *to understand and record what is true*, of which surely there is and for ever will be a whole infinitude unknown to us, of infinite importance to us. Poetry will more and more come to be understood as nothing but higher knowledge, and the only genuine Romance for grown persons, Reality."

As I was copying this sentence, a pamphlet was put into my hand, written by a clergyman, denouncing "Woe, woe, woe! to exceedingly young men of stubborn instincts, calling themselves Pre-Raphaelites." \*

I thank God that the Pre-Raphaelites *are* young, and that strength is still with them, and life, with all the war of it, still in front of them. Yet Everett Millais is this year of the exact age at which Raphael painted the *Disputa*, his greatest work; Rossetti and Hunt are both of them older still,—nor is there one member of the body so young as Giotto, when he was chosen from among the painters of Italy to decorate the Vatican. But Italy, in her great period, knew her great men, and did not "despise their youth." It is reserved for England to insult the strength of her noblest children—to wither their warm enthusiasm early into the bitterness of patient battle, and leave to those whom she should have cherished and aided, no hope but in resolution, no refuge but in disdain.

Indeed it is woeful, when the young usurp the place, or despise the wisdom, of the aged; and among the many dark signs of these times, the disobedience and insolence of youth are among the darkest. But with whom is the fault? Youth never yet lost its modesty where age had not lost its honour; nor did childhood ever refuse its reverence, except where age had forgotten correction. The cry, "Go up thou bald head," will never be heard in the land which

\* *Art, its Constitution and Capacities, etc.*, by the Rev. Edward Young, M.A. The phrase "exceedingly young men, of stubborn instincts," being twice quoted (carefully excluding the context) from my pamphlet on *Pre-Raphaelitism*.

remembers the precept, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones;" and although indeed youth *may* become despicable, when its eager hope is changed into presumption, and its progressive power into arrested pride, there is something more despicable still, in the old age which has learned neither judgment nor gentleness, which is weak without charity, and cold without discretion.

# PRE-RAPHAELITISM









TO  
FRANCIS HAWKSWORTH FAWKES, ESQ.  
OF FARNLEY

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BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND

JOHN RUSKIN



## PREFACE

EIGHT years ago, in the close of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, I ventured to give the following advice to the young artists of England:—

“ They should go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thought but how best to penetrate her meaning; rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing.” Advice which, whether bad or good, involved infinite labour and humiliation in the following it; and was therefore, for the most part, rejected.

It has, however, at last been carried out, to the very letter, by a group of men who, for their reward, have been assailed with the most scurrilous abuse which I ever recollect seeing issue from the public press. I have, therefore, thought it due to them to contradict the directly false statements which have been made respecting their works; and to point out the kind of merit which, however deficient in some respects, those works possess beyond the possibility of dispute.

DENMARK HILL, Aug. 1851.



## PRE-RAPHAELITISM

It may be proved, with much certainty, that God intends no man to live in this world without working: but it seems to me no less evident that He intends every man to be happy in his work. It is written, "in the sweat of thy brow," but it was never written, "in the breaking of thine heart," thou shalt eat bread: and I find that, as on the one hand, infinite misery is caused by idle people, who both fail in doing what was appointed for them to do, and set in motion various springs of mischief in matters in which they should have no concern, so on the other hand, no small misery is caused by over-worked and unhappy people, in the dark views which they necessarily take up themselves, and force upon others, of work itself. Were it not so, I believe the fact of their being unhappy is in itself a violation of divine law, and a sign of some kind of folly or sin in their way of life. Now in order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it: They must not do too much of it: and they must have a sense of success in it—not a doubtful sense, such as needs some testimony of other people for its confirmation, but a sure sense, or rather knowledge, that so much work has been done well, and fruitfully done, whatever the world may say or think about it. So that in order that a man may be happy, it is necessary that he should not only be capable of his work, but a good judge of his work.

The first thing then that he has to do, if unhappily his parents or masters have not done it for him, is to find out what he is fit for. In which inquiry a man may be very safely guided by his likings, if he be not also guided by his pride. People usually reason in some such fashion as this: "I don't seem quite fit for a head-manager in the firm of — & Co., therefore, in all probability, I am fit to be Chancellor of the Exchequer." Whereas, they ought rather to reason thus: "I don't seem quite fit to be head-manager in the firm of — & Co., but I dare say I might do some-



thing in a small greengrocery business; I used to be a good judge of peas;" that is to say, always trying lower instead of trying higher, until they find bottom; once well set on the ground, a man may build up by degrees, safely, instead of disturbing every one in his neighbourhood by perpetual catastrophes. But this kind of humility is rendered especially difficult in these days, by the contumely thrown on men in humble employments. The very removal of the massy bars which once separated one class of society from another, has rendered it tenfold more shameful in foolish people's, *i.e.* in most people's eyes, to remain in the lower grades of it, than ever it was before. When a man born of an artisan was looked upon as an entirely different species of animal from a man born of a noble, it made him no more uncomfortable or ashamed to remain that different species of animal, than it makes a horse ashamed to remain a horse, and not to become a giraffe. But now that a man may make money, and rise in the world, and associate himself, unreprouched, with people once far above him, not only is the natural discontentedness of humanity developed to an unheard-of extent, whatever a man's position, but it becomes a veritable shame to him to remain in the state he was born in, and everybody thinks it his *duty* to try to be a "gentleman." Persons who have any influence in the management of public institutions for charitable education know how common this feeling has become. Hardly a day passes but they receive letters from mothers who want all their six or eight sons to go to college, and make the grand tour in the long vacation, and who think there is something wrong in the foundations of society, because this is not possible. Out of every ten letters of this kind, nine will allege, as the reason of the writer's importunity, their desire to keep their families in such and such a "station of life." There is no real desire for the safety, the discipline, or the moral good of the children, only a panic horror of the inexpressibly pitiable calamity of their living a ledge or two lower on the molehill of the world—a calamity to be averted at any cost whatever, of struggle, anxiety, and shortening of life itself. I do not believe that any greater good could be achieved for the country, than the change in public feeling on this head, which might be brought about by a few benevolent men, undeniably in the class of "gentlemen," who would, on principle, enter into some of our commonest

trades; and make them honourable; showing that it was possible for a man to retain his dignity, and remain, in the best sense, a gentleman, though part of his time was every day occupied in manual labour, or even in serving customers over a counter. I do not in the last see why courtesy, and gravity, and sympathy with the feelings of others, and courage, and truth, and piety, and what else goes to make up a gentleman's character, should not be found behind a counter as well as elsewhere, if they were demanded or even hoped for, there.

Let us suppose, then, that the man's way of life and manner of work have been discreetly chosen; then the next thing to be required is, that he do not over-work himself therein. I am not going to say anything here about the various errors in our systems of society and commerce, which appear (I am not sure if they ever do more than appear) to force us to over-work ourselves merely that we may live; nor about the still more fruitful cause of unhealthy toil—the incapability, in many men, of being content with the little that is indeed necessary to their happiness. I have only a word or two to say about one special cause of over-work—the ambitious desire of doing great or clever things, and the hope of accomplishing them by immense efforts: hope as vain as it is pernicious; not only making men over-work themselves, but rendering all the work they do unwholesome to them. I say it is a vain hope, and let the reader be assured of this (it is a truth all-important to the best interests of humanity). *No great intellectual thing was ever done by great effort*; a great thing can only be done by a great man, and he does it *without* effort. Nothing is, at present, less understood by us than this—nothing is more necessary to be understood. Let me try to say it as clearly, and explain it as fully as I may.

I have said no great *intellectual* thing; for I do not mean the assertion to extend to things moral. On the contrary, it seems to me that just because we are intended, as long as we live, to be in a state of intense moral effort, we are *not* intended to be in intense physical or intellectual effort. Our full energies are to be given to the soul's work—to the great fight with the Dragon—the taking the kingdom of heaven by force. But the body's work and head's work are to be done quietly, and comparatively without effort. Neither limbs nor brain are ever to be strained to their

utmost; that is not the way in which the greatest quantity of work is to be got out of them: they are never to be worked furiously, but with tranquillity and constancy. We are to follow the plough from sunrise to sunset, but not to pull in race-boats at the twilight: we shall get no fruit of that kind of work, only disease of the heart.

How many pangs would be spared to thousands, if this great truth and law were but once sincerely, humbly understood,—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; that, when it is needed to be done, there is perhaps only one man in the world who can do it; but *he* can do it without any trouble—without more trouble, that is, than it costs small people to do small things; nay, perhaps, with less. And yet what truth lies more openly on the surface of all human phenomena? Is not the evidence of Ease on the very front of all the greatest works in existence? Do they not say plainly to us, not, “there has been a great *effort* here,” but, “there has been a great *power* here”? It is not the weariness of mortality, but the strength of divinity, which we have to recognise in all mighty things; and that is just what we now *never* recognise, but think that we are to do great things, by help of iron bars and perspiration:—alas! we shall do nothing that way but lose some pounds of our own weight.

Yet let me not be misunderstood, nor this great truth be supposed anywise resolvable into the favourite dogma of young men, that they need not work if they have genius. The fact is that a man of genius is always far more ready to work than other people, and gets so much more good from the work that he does, and is often so little conscious of the inherent divinity in himself, that he is very apt to ascribe all his capacity to his work, and to tell those who ask how he came to be what he is: “If I *am* anything, which I much doubt, I made myself so merely by labour.” This was Newton’s way of talking and I suppose it would be the general tone of men whose genius had been devoted to the physical sciences. Genius in the Arts must commonly be more self-conscious, but in whatever field, it will always be distinguished by its perpetual, steady, well-directed, happy, and faithful labour in accumulating and disciplining its powers, as well as by its gigantic, incommunicable facility in exercising them. Therefore, literally, it is no man’s business whether he has genius or not: work he must,

whatever he is, but quietly and steadily; and the natural and unforced results of such work will be always the things that God meant him to do, and will be his best. No agonies nor heart-rendings will enable him to do any better. If he be a great man, they will be great things; if a small man, small things; but always, if thus peacefully done, good and right; always, if restlessly and ambitiously done, false, hollow, and despicable.

Then the third thing needed was, I said, that a man should be a good judge of his work; and this chiefly that he may not be dependent upon popular opinion for the manner of doing it, but also that he may have the just encouragement of the sense of progress, and an honest consciousness of victory: how else can he become

“That awful independent on to-morrow,  
Whose yesterdays look backwards with a smile.”

I am persuaded that the real nourishment and help of such a feeling as this is nearly unknown to half the workmen of the present day. For whatever appearance of self-complacency there may be in their outward bearing, it is visible enough, by their feverish jealousy of each other, how little confidence they have in the sterling value of their several doings. Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up; and there is too visible distress and hopelessness in men's aspects to admit of the supposition that they have any stable support of faith in themselves.

I have stated these principles generally, because there is no branch of labour to which they do not apply: But there is one in which our ignorance or forgetfulness of them has caused an incalculable amount of suffering: and I would endeavour now to reconsider them with especial reference to it,—the branch of the Arts.

In general, the men who are employed in the Arts have freely chosen their profession, and suppose themselves to have especial faculty for it; yet, as a body, they are not happy men. For which this seems to me the reason,—that they are expected, and themselves expect, to make their bread *by being clever*—not by steady or quiet work; and are, therefore, for the most part, trying to be clever, and so living in an utterly false state of mind and action.

This is the case, to the same extent, in no other profession or employment. A lawyer may indeed suspect that,

unless he has more wit than those around him, he is not likely to advance in his profession; but he will not be always thinking how he is to display his wit. He will generally understand, early in his career, that wit must be left to take care of itself, and that it is hard knowledge of law and vigorous examination and collation of the facts of every case entrusted to him, which his clients will mainly demand: this it is which he is to be paid for; and this is healthy and measurable labour, payable by the hour. If he happen to have keen natural perception and quick wit, these will come into play in their due time and place, but he will not think of them as his chief power: and if he have them not, he may still hope that industry and conscientiousness may enable him to rise in his profession without them. Again in the case of clergymen: that they are sorely tempted to display their eloquence or wit, none who know their own hearts will deny, but then they *know* this to be a temptation: they never would suppose that cleverness was all that was to be expected from them, or would sit down deliberately to write a clever sermon: even the dumbest or vainest of them would throw some veil over their vanity, and pretend to some profitableness of purpose in what they did. They would not openly ask of their hearers—Did you think my sermon ingenious, or my language poetical? They would early understand that they were not paid for being ingenious, nor called to be so, but to preach truth; that if they happened to possess wit, eloquence, or originality, these would appear and be of service in due time, but were not to be continually sought after or exhibited; and if it should happen that they had them not, they might still be serviceable pastors without them.

Not so with the unhappy artist. No one expects any honest or useful work of him; but every one expects him to be ingenious. Originality, dexterity, invention, imagination, everything is asked of him except what alone is to be had for asking—honesty and sound work, and the due discharge of his function as a painter. What function? asks the reader in some surprise. He may well ask; for I suppose few painters have any idea what their function is, or even that they have any at all.

And yet surely it is not so difficult to discover. The faculties, which when a man finds in himself, he resolves to be a painter, are, I suppose, intenseness of observation and

facility of imitation. The man is created an observer and an imitator; and his function is to convey knowledge to his fellow-men, of such things as cannot be taught otherwise than ocularly. For a long time this function remained a religious one: it was to impress upon the popular mind the reality of the objects of faith, and the truth of the histories of Scripture, by giving visible form to both. That function has now passed away, and none has as yet taken its place. The painter has no profession, no purpose. He is an idler on the earth, chasing the shadows of his own fancies.

But he was never meant to be this. The sudden and universal Naturalism, or inclination to copy ordinary natural objects, which manifested itself among the painters of Europe, at the moment when the invention of printing superseded their legendary labours, was no false instinct. It was misunderstood and misapplied, but it came at the right time, and has maintained itself through all kinds of abuse; presenting, in the recent schools of landscape, perhaps only the first fruits of its power. That instinct was urging every painter in Europe at the same moment to his true duty—the *faithful representation of all objects of historical interest, or of natural beauty existent at the period*; representation such as might at once aid the advance of the sciences, and keep faithful record of every monument of past ages which was likely to be swept away in the approaching eras of revolutionary change.

The instinct came, as I said, exactly at the right moment; and let the reader consider what amount and kind of general knowledge might by this time have been possessed by the nations of Europe, had their painters understood and obeyed it. Suppose that, after disciplining themselves so as to be able to draw, with unerring precision, each the particular kind of subject in which he most delighted, they had separated into two great armies of historians and naturalists;—that the first had painted with absolute faithfulness every edifice, every city, every battle-field, every scene of the slightest historical interest, precisely and completely rendering their aspect at the time; and that their companions, according to their several powers, had painted with like fidelity the plants and animals, the natural scenery, and the atmospheric phenomena of every country on the earth—suppose that a faithful and complete record were now in our museums of every building destroyed by war, or

time, or innovation, during these last two hundred years—suppose that each recess of every mountain chain of Europe had been penetrated, and its rocks drawn with such accuracy that the geologist's diagram was no longer necessary—suppose that every tree of the forest had been drawn in its noblest aspect, every beast of the field in its savage life—that all these gatherings were already in our national galleries, and that the painters of the present day were labouring, happily and earnestly, to multiply them, and put such means of knowledge more and more within reach of the common people—would not that be a more honourable life for them, than gaining precarious bread by “bright effects”? They think not, perhaps. They think it easy, and therefore contemptible, to be truthful; they have been taught so all their lives. But it is not so, whoever taught it them. It is most difficult, and worthy of the greatest men's greatest effort, to render, as it should be rendered, the simplest of the natural features of the earth; but also be it remembered, no man is confined to the simplest; each may look out work for himself where he chooses, and it will be strange if he cannot find something hard enough for him. The excuse is, however, one of the lips only; for every painter knows, that when he draws back from the attempt to render Nature as she is, it is oftener in cowardice than in disdain.

I must leave the reader to pursue this subject for himself; I have not space to suggest to him the tenth part of the advantages which would follow, both to the painter from such an understanding of his mission, and to the whole people, in the results of his labour. Consider how the man himself would be elevated; how content he would become, how earnest, how full of all accurate and noble knowledge, how free from envy—knowing creation to be infinite, feeling at once the value of what he did, and yet the nothingness. Consider the advantage to the people: the immeasurably larger interest given to art itself; the easy, pleasurable, and perfect knowledge conveyed by it, in every subject; the far greater number of men who might be healthily and profitably occupied with it as a means of livelihood; the useful direction of myriads of inferior talents, now left fading away in misery. Conceive all this, and then look around at our exhibitions, and behold the “cattle pieces,” and “sea pieces,” and “fruit pieces,” and “family pieces”; the eternal brown cows in ditches, and white sails in squalls,

and sliced lemons in saucers, and foolish faces in simpers;—and try to feel what we are, and what we might have been.

Take a single instance in one branch of archæology. Let those who are interested in the history of Religion consider what a treasure we should now have possessed, if, instead of painting pots, and vegetables, and drunken peasantry, the most accurate painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been set to copy, line for line, the religious and domestic sculpture on the German, Flemish, and French cathedrals and castles; and if every building destroyed in the French or in any other subsequent revolution, had thus been drawn in all its parts with the same precision with which Gerard Douw or Mieris paint basreliefs of Cupids. Consider, even now, what incalculable treasure is still left in ancient basreliefs, full of every kind of legendary interest, of subtle expression, of priceless evidence as to the character, feelings, habits, histories, of past generations, in neglected and shattered churches and domestic buildings, rapidly disappearing over the whole of Europe—treasure which, once lost, the labour of all men living cannot bring back again; and then look at the myriads of men, with skill enough, if they had but the commonest schooling, to record all this faithfully, who are making their bread by drawing dances of naked women from academy models, or idealities of chivalry fitted out with Wardour Street armour, or eternal scenes from *Gil Blas*, *Don Quixote*, and the *Vicar of Wakefield*, or mountain sceneries with young idiots of Londoners wearing Highland bonnets and brandishing rifles in the foregrounds. Do but think of these things in the breadth of their inexpressible imbecility, and then go and stand before that broken basrelief in the southern gate of Lincoln Cathedral, and see if there is no fibre of the heart in you that will break too.

. But is there to be no place left, it will be indignantly asked, for imagination and invention, for poetical power, or love of ideal beauty? Yes; the highest, the noblest place—that which these only can attain when they are all used in the cause, and with the aid of truth. Wherever imagination and sentiment are, they will either show themselves without forcing, or, if capable of artificial development, the kind of training which such a school of art would give them would be the best they could receive. The infinite absurdity and failure of our present training consists mainly



in this, that we do not rank imagination and invention high enough, and suppose that they *can* be taught. Throughout every sentence that I ever have written, the reader will find the same rank attributed to these powers,—the rank of a purely divine gift, not to be attained, increased, or in anywise modified by teaching, only in various ways capable of being concealed or quenched. Understand this thoroughly; know once for all, that a poet on canvas is exactly the same species of creature as a poet in song, and nearly every error in our methods of teaching will be done away with. For who among us now thinks of bringing men up to be poets?—of producing poets by any kind of general recipe or method of cultivation? Suppose even that we see in a youth that which we hope may, in its development, become a power of this kind, should we instantly, supposing that we wanted to make a poet of him, and nothing else, forbid him all quiet, steady, rational labour? Should we force him to perpetual spinning of new crudities out of his boyish brain, and set before him, as the only objects of his study, the laws of versification which criticism has supposed itself to discover in the works of previous writers? Whatever gifts the boy had, would much be likely to come of them so treated? unless, indeed, they were so great as to break through all such snares of falsehood and vanity, and build their own foundation in spite of us; whereas if, as in cases numbering millions against units, the natural gifts were too weak to do this, could anything come of such training but utter inanity and spuriousness of the whole man? But if we had sense, should we not rather restrain and bridle the first flame of invention in early youth, heaping material on it as one would on the first sparks and tongues of a fire which we desired to feed into greatness? Should we not educate the whole intellect into general strength, and all the affections into warmth and honesty, and look to heaven for the rest? This, I say, we should have sense enough to do, in order to produce a poet in words: but, it being required to produce a poet on canvas, what is our way of setting to work? We begin, in all probability, by telling the youth of fifteen or sixteen, that Nature is full of faults, and that he is to improve her; but that Raphael is perfection, and that the more he copies Raphael the better; that after much copying of Raphael, he is to try what he can do himself in a Raphaellesque, but

yet original manner: that is to say, he is to try to do something very clever all out of his own head, but yet this clever something is to be properly subjected to Raphaelesque rules, is to have a principal light occupying one-seventh of its space, and a principal shadow occupying one-third of the same; that no two people's heads in the picture are to be turned the same way, and that all the personages represented are to possess ideal beauty of the highest order, which ideal beauty consists partly in a Greek outline of nose, partly in proportions expressible in decimal fractions between the lips and chin; but partly also in that degree of improvement which the youth of sixteen is to bestow upon God's work in general. This I say is the kind of teaching which through various channels, Royal Academy lecturings, press criticisms, public enthusiasm, and not least by solid weight of gold, we give to our young men. And we wonder we have no painters!

But we do worse than this. Within the last few years some sense of the real tendency of such teaching has appeared in some of our younger painters. It only *could* appear in the younger ones, our older men having become familiarised with the false system, or else having passed through it and forgotten it, not well knowing the degree of harm they had sustained. This sense appeared, among our youths,—increased,—matured into resolute action. Necessarily, to exist at all, it needed the support both of strong instincts and of considerable self-confidence, otherwise it must at once have been borne down by the weight of general authority and received canon law. Strong instincts are apt to make men strange, and rude; self-confidence, however well founded, to give much of what they do or say the appearance of impertinence. Look at the self-confidence of Wordsworth, stiffening every other sentence of his prefaces into defiance; there is no more of it than was needed to enable him to do his work, yet it is not a little ungraceful here and there. Suppose this stubbornness and self-trust in a youth, labouring in an art of which the executive part is confessedly to be best learnt from masters, and we shall hardly wonder that much of his work has a certain awkwardness and stiffness in it, or that he should be regarded with disfavour by many, even the most temperate, of the judges trained in the system he was breaking through, and with utter contempt and reprobation by the envious

and the dull. Consider, farther, that the particular system to be overthrown was, in the present case, one of which the main characteristic was the pursuit of beauty at the expense of manliness and truth; and it will seem likely, *a priori*, that the men intended successfully to resist the influence of such a system should be endowed with little natural sense of beauty, and thus rendered dead to the temptation it presented. Summing up these conditions, there is surely little cause for surprise that pictures painted, in a temper of resistance, by exceedingly young men, of stubborn instincts and positive self-trust, and with little natural perception of beauty, should not be calculated, at the first glance, to win us from works enriched by plagiarism, polished by convention, invested with all the attractiveness of artificial grace, and recommended to our respect by established authority.

We should, however, on the other hand, have anticipated, that in proportion to the strength of character required for the effort, and to the absence of distracting sentiments, whether respect for precedent, or affection for ideal beauty, would be the energy exhibited in the pursuit of the special objects which the youths proposed to themselves, and their success in attaining them.

All this has actually been the case, but in a degree which it would have been impossible to anticipate. That two youths, of the respective ages of eighteen and twenty, should have conceived for themselves a totally independent and sincere method of study, and enthusiastically persevered in it against every kind of dissuasion and opposition, is strange enough; that in the third or fourth year of their efforts they should have produced works in many parts not inferior to the best of Albert Durer, this is perhaps not less strange. But the loudness and universality of the howl which the common critics of the press have raised against them, the utter absence of all generous help or encouragement from those who can both measure their toil and appreciate their success, and the shrill, shallow laughter of those who can do neither the one nor the other,—these are strangest of all—unimaginable unless they had been experienced.

And as if these were not enough, private malice is at work against them, in its own small slimy way. The very day after I had written my second letter to the *Times* in the defence of the Pre-Raphaelites, I received an anony-

mous letter respecting one of them, from some person apparently hardly capable of spelling, and about as vile a specimen of petty malignity as ever blotted paper. I think it well that the public should know this, and so get some insight into the sources of the spirit which is at work against these men—how first roused it is difficult to say, for one would hardly have thought that mere eccentricity in young artists could have excited an hostility so determined and so cruel;—hostility which hesitated at no assertion, however impudent. That of the “absence of perspective” was one of the most curious pieces of the hue and cry which began with the *Times*, and died away in feeble maundering in the *Art Union*; I contradicted it in the *Times*—I here contradict it directly for the second time. There was not a single error in perspective in three out of the four pictures in question. But if otherwise, would it have been anything remarkable in them? I doubt if, with the exception of the pictures of David Roberts, there were one architectural drawing in perspective on the walls of the Academy; I never met but with two men in my life who knew enough of perspective to draw a Gothic arch in a retiring plane, so that its lateral dimensions and curvatures might be calculated to scale from the drawing. Our architects certainly do not, and it was but the other day that, talking to one of the most distinguished among them, the author of several most valuable works, I found he actually did not know how to draw a circle in perspective. And in this state of general science our writers for the press take it upon them to tell us, that the forest-trees in Mr. Hunt’s *Sylvia*, and the bunches of lilies in Mr. Collins’s *Convent Thoughts*, are out of perspective.\*

It might not, I think, in such circumstances, have been ungraceful or unwise in the Academicians themselves to have defended their young pupils, at least by the contra-

\* It was not a little curious, that in the very number of the *Art Union* which repeated this direct falsehood about the Pre-Raphaelite rejection of “linear perspective” (by-the-bye, the next time J. B. takes upon him to speak of anyone connected with the Universities, he may as well first ascertain the difference between a Graduate and an Under-Graduate), the second plate given should have been of a picture of Bonington’s,—a professional landscape painter, observe,—for the want of *aerial* perspective, in which the *Art Union* itself was obliged to apologise, and in which the artist has committed nearly as many blunders in *linear* perspective as there are lines in the picture.

diction of statements directly false respecting them,\* and the direction of the mind and sight of the public to such real merit as they possess. If Sir Charles Eastlake, Mulready, Edwin and Charles Landseer, Cope, and Dyce would each of them simply state their own private opinion respecting their paintings, sign it, and publish it, I believe the act would be of more service to English art than anything the Academy has done since it was founded. But as I cannot hope for this, I can only ask the public to give their pictures careful examination, and to look at them at once with the indulgence and the respect which I have endeavoured to show they deserve.

Yet let me not be misunderstood. I have adduced them only as examples of the kind of study which I would desire to see substituted for that of our modern schools, and of singular success in certain characters, finish of detail, and brilliancy of colour. What faculties, higher than

\* These false statements may be reduced to three principal heads, and directly contradicted in succession.

The first, the current fallacy of society as well as of the press, was, that the Pre-Raphaelites imitated the *errors* of early painters.

A falsehood of this kind could not have obtained credence anywhere but in England, few English people, comparatively, having ever seen a picture of early Italian Masters. If they had, they would have known that the Pre-Raphaelite pictures are just as superior to the early Italian in skill of manipulation, power of drawing, and knowledge of effect, as inferior to them in grace of design; and that in a word, there is not a shadow of resemblance between the two styles. The Pre-Raphaelites imitate no pictures: they paint from Nature only. But they have opposed themselves as a body, to that kind of teaching above described, which only began after Raphael's time; and they have opposed themselves as sternly to the entire feeling of the Renaissance schools; a feeling compounded of indolence, infidelity, sensuality, and shallow pride. Therefore they have called themselves Pre-Raphaelite. If they adhere to their principles, and paint Nature as it is around them, with the help of modern science, with the earnestness of the men of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they will, as I said, found a new and noble school in England. If their sympathies with the early artists lead them into mediævalism or Romanism, they will of course come to nothing. But I believe there is no danger of this, at least for the strongest among them. There may be some weak ones, whom the Tractarian heresies may touch; but if so they will drop off like decayed branches from a strong stem. I hope all things from the school.

The second falsehood was, that the Pre-Raphaelites did not draw well. This was asserted, and could have been asserted only by persons who had never looked at the pictures.

The third falsehood was, that they had no system of light and shade. To which it may be simply replied that their system of light and shade is exactly the same as the Sun's; which is, I believe, likely to outlast that of the Renaissance, however brilliant.

imitative, may be in these men, I do not yet venture to say; but I do say, that if they exist, such faculties will manifest themselves in due time all the more forcibly because they have received training so severe.

For it is always to be remembered, that no one mind is like another, either in its powers or perceptions; and while the main principles of training must be the same for all, the result in each will be as various as the kinds of truth which each will apprehend; therefore, also, the modes of effort, even in men whose inner principles and final aims are exactly the same. Suppose, for instance, two men, equally honest, equally industrious, equally impressed with a humble desire to render some part of what they saw in Nature faithfully; and, otherwise, trained in convictions such as I have above endeavoured to induce. But one of them is quiet in temperament, has a feeble memory, no invention, and excessively keen sight. The other is impatient in temperament, has a memory which nothing escapes, an invention which never rests, and is comparatively near-sighted.

Set them both free in the same field in a mountain valley. One sees everything, small and large, with almost the same clearness; mountains and grasshoppers alike; the leaves on the branches, the veins in the pebbles, the bubbles in the stream; but he can remember nothing, and invent nothing. Patiently he sets himself to his mighty task; abandoning at once all thoughts of seizing transient effects, or giving general impressions of that which his eyes present to him in microscopical dissection, he chooses some small portion out of the infinite scene, and calculates with courage the number of weeks which must elapse before he can do justice to the intensity of his perceptions, or the fulness of matter in his subject.

Meantime, the other has been watching the change of the clouds, and the march of the light along the mountain sides; he beholds the entire scene in broad, soft masses of true gradation, and the very feebleness of his sight is in some sort an advantage to him, in making him more sensible of the aerial mystery of distance, and hiding from him the multitudes of circumstances which it would have been impossible for him to represent. But there is not one change in the casting of the jagged shadows along the hollows of the hills, but it is fixed on his mind for ever; not

a flake of spray has broken from the sea of cloud about their bases, but he has watched it as it melts away, and could recall it to its lost place in heaven by the slightest effort of his thoughts. Not only so, but thousands and thousands of such images, of older scenes, remain congregated in his mind, each mingling in new associations with those now visibly passing before him, and these again confused with other images of his own ceaseless, sleepless imagination, flashing by in sudden troops. Fancy how his paper will be covered with stray symbols and blots, and undecipherable short-hand:—as for his sitting down to “draw from Nature,” there was not one of the things which he wished to represent, that stayed for so much as five seconds together: but none of them escaped, for all that: they are sealed up in that strange storehouse of his; he may take one of them out perhaps, this day twenty years, and paint it in his dark room, far away. Now, observe, you may tell both of these men, when they are young, that they are to be honest, that they have an important function, and that they are not to care what Raphael did. This you may wholesomely impress on them both. But fancy the exquisite absurdity of expecting either of them to possess any of the qualities of the other.

I have supposed the feebleness of sight in the last, and of invention in the first painter, that the contrast between them might be more striking; but, with very slight modification, both the characters are real. Grant to the first considerable inventive power, with exquisite sense of colour; and give to the second, in addition to all his other faculties, the eye of an eagle; and the first is John Everett Millais, the second Joseph Mallard William Turner.

They are among the few men who have defied all false teaching, and have therefore, in great measure, done justice to the gifts with which they were entrusted. They stand at opposite poles, marking culminating points of art in both directions; between them, or in various relations to them, we may class five or six more living artists who, in like manner, have done justice to their powers. I trust that I may be pardoned for naming them, in order that the reader may know how the strong innate genius in each has been invariably accompanied with the same humility, earnestness, and industry in study.

It is hardly necessary to point out the earnestness or

humility in the works of William Hunt; but it may be so to suggest the high value they possess as records of English rural life, and *still* life. Who is there who for a moment could contend with him in the unaffected, yet humorous truth with which he has painted our peasant children? Who is there who does not sympathise with him in the simple love with which he dwells on the brightness and bloom of our summer fruit and flowers? And yet there is something to be regretted concerning him; why should he be allowed continually to paint the same bunches of hot-house grapes, and supply to the Water Colour Society a succession of pineapples with the regularity of a Covent Garden fruiterer? He has of late discovered that primrose banks are lovely, but there are other things grow wild besides primroses: what undreamt of loveliness might he not bring back to us, if he would lose himself for a summer in Highland foregrounds; if he would paint the heather as it grows, and the foxglove and the harebell as they nestle in the clefts of the rocks, and the mosses and bright lichens of the rocks themselves. And then, cross to the Jura, and bring back a piece of Jura pasture in spring; with the gentians in their earliest blue, and a soldanelle beside the fading snow! And return again, and paint a grey wall of alpine crag, with budding roses crowning it like a wreath of rubies. That is what he was meant to do in this world; not to paint bouquets in China vases.

I have in various other places expressed my sincere respect for the works of Samuel Prout: his shortness of sight has necessarily prevented their possessing delicacy of finish or fulness of minor detail; but I think that those of no other living artist furnish an example so striking of innate and special instinct, sent to do a particular work at the exact and only period when it was possible. At the instant when peace had been established all over Europe, but when neither national character nor national architecture had as yet been seriously changed by promiscuous intercourse or modern "improvement"; when, however, nearly every ancient and beautiful building had been long left in a state of comparative neglect, so that its aspect of partial ruinousness, and of separation from recent active life, gave to every edifice a peculiar interest—half sorrowful, half sublime;—at that moment Prout was trained among the rough rocks and simple cottages of Cornwall, until his



eye was accustomed to follow with delight the rents and breaks, and irregularities which, to another man, would have been offensive; and then, gifted with infinite readiness in composition, but also with infinite affection for the kind of subjects he had to portray, he was sent to preserve, in an almost innumerable series of drawings, *every one made on the spot*, the aspect borne, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by cities which, in a few years more, re-kindled wars, or unexpected prosperities, were to ravage or renovate, into nothingness.

It seems strange to pass from Prout to John Lewis; but there is this fellowship between them, that both seem to have been intended to appreciate the characters of foreign countries more than of their own, nay, to have been born in England chiefly that the excitement of strangeness might enhance to them the interest of the scenes they had to represent. I believe John Lewis to have done more entire justice to all his powers, (and they are magnificent ones,) than any other man amongst us. His mission was evidently to portray the comparatively animal life of the southern and eastern families of mankind. For this, he was prepared in a somewhat singular way—by being led to study, and endowed with altogether peculiar apprehension of the most sublime characters of animals themselves. Rubens, Rembrandt, Snyders, Tintoret, and Titian, have all, in various ways, drawn wild beasts magnificently; but they have in some sort humanised or demonised them, making them either ravenous fiends, or educated beasts, that would draw cars, and had respect for hermits. The sullen isolation of the brutal nature; the dignity and quietness of the mighty limbs; the shaggy mountainous power, mingled with grace as of a flowing stream; the stealthy restraint of strength and wrath in every soundless motion of the gigantic frame; all this seems never to have been seen, much less drawn, until Lewis drew and himself engraved a series of animal subjects, now many years ago. Since then, he has devoted himself to the portraiture of those European and Asiatic races, among whom the refinements of civilisation exist without its laws or its energies, and in whom the fierceness, indolence, and subtlety of animal nature are associated with brilliant imagination and strong affections. To this task he has brought not only intense perception of the kind of character, but powers of artistical composition like

those of the great Venetians, displaying, at the same time, a refinement of drawing almost miraculous, and appreciable only, as the minutiae of Nature itself are appreciable, by the help of the microscope. The value, therefore, of his works, as records of the aspect of the scenery and inhabitants of the south of Spain and of the East, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, is quite above all estimate.

I hardly know how to speak of Mulready: in delicacy and completion of drawing, and splendour of colour, he takes place beside John Lewis and the Pre-Raphaelites; but he has, throughout his career, displayed no definiteness in choice of subject. He must be named among the painters who have studied with industry, and have made themselves great by doing so; but having obtained a consummate method of execution, he has thrown it away on subjects either altogether uninteresting, or above his powers, or unfit for pictorial representation. *The Cherry Woman*, exhibited in 1850, may be named as an example of the first kind; the *Burchell and Sophia* of the second (the character of Sir William Thornhill being utterly missed); the *Seven Ages* of the third; for this subject cannot be painted. In the written passage, the thoughts are progressive and connected; in the picture they must be co-existent, and yet separate; nor can all the characters of the ages be rendered in painting at all. One may represent the soldier at the cannon's mouth, but one cannot paint the "bubble reputation" which he seeks. Mulready, therefore, while he has always produced exquisite pieces of painting, has failed in doing anything which can be of true or extensive use. He has, indeed, understood how to discipline his genius, but never how to direct it.

Edwin Landseer is the last painter but one whom I shall name: I need not point out to anyone acquainted with his earlier works, the labour, or watchfulness of Nature which they involve, nor need I do more than allude to the peculiar faculties of his mind. It will at once be granted that the highest merits of his pictures are throughout found in those parts of them which are least like what had before been accomplished; and that it was not by the study of Raphael that he attained his eminent success, but by a healthy love of Scotch terriers.

None of these painters, however, it will be answered, afford examples of the rise of the highest imaginative power

out of close study of matters of fact. Be it remembered however, that the imaginative power, in its magnificence, is not to be found every day. Lewis has it in no mean degree, but we cannot hope to find it at its highest more than once in an age. We *have* had it once, and must be content.

Towards the close of the last century, among the various drawings executed, according to the quiet manner of the time, in greyish blue, with brown foregrounds, some began to be noticed as exhibiting rather more than ordinary diligence and delicacy, signed W. Turner.\* There was nothing, however, in them at all indicative of genius, or even of more than ordinary talent, unless in some of the subjects a large perception of space, and excessive clearness and decision in the arrangement of masses. Gradually and cautiously the blues became mingled with delicate green, and then with gold; the browns in the foreground became first more positive, and then were slightly mingled with other local colours; while the touch, which had at first been heavy and broken, like that of the ordinary drawing masters of the time, grew more and more refined and expressive, until it lost itself in a method of execution often too delicate for the eye to follow, rendering, with a precision before unexampled, both the texture and the form of every object. The style may be considered as perfectly formed about the year 1800, and it remained unchanged for twenty years.

During that period the painter had attempted, and with more or less success had rendered, every order of landscape subject, but always on the same principle, subduing the colours of Nature into a harmony of which the key-notes are greyish green and brown; pure blues, and delicate golden yellows being admitted in small quantity as the lowest and highest limits of shade and light: and bright local colours in extremely small quantity in figures or other minor accessories.

Pictures executed on such a system are not, properly speaking, works in *colour* at all; they are studies of light and shade, in which both the shade and the distance are rendered in the general hue which best expresses their attributes of coolness and transparency; and the lights and the foreground are executed in that which best expresses

\* He did not use his full signature, J. M. W., until about the year 1800.

their warmth and solidity. This advantage may just as well be taken as not, in studies of light and shadow to be executed with the hand; but the use of two, three, or four colours, always in the same relations and places, does not in the least constitute the work a study of colour, any more than the brown engravings of the *Liber Studiorum*; nor would the idea of colour be in general more present to the artist's mind when he was at work on one of these drawings, than when he was using pure brown in the mezzotint engraving. But the idea of space, warmth, and freshness being not successfully expressible in a single tint, and perfectly expressible by the admission of three or four, he allows himself this advantage when it is possible, without in the least embarrassing himself with the actual colour of the objects to be represented. A stone in the foreground might in Nature have been cold grey, but it will be drawn nevertheless of a rich brown, because it is in the foreground; a hill in the distance might in Nature be purple with heath, or golden with furze; but it will be drawn, nevertheless, of a cool grey, because it is in the distance.

This at least was the general theory,—carried out with great severity in many, both of the drawings and pictures executed by him during the period: in others more or less modified by the cautious introduction of colour, as the painter felt his liberty increasing; for the system was evidently never considered as final, or as anything more than a means of progress: the conventional, easily manageable colour, was visibly adopted, only that his mind might be at perfect liberty to address itself to the acquirement of the first and most necessary knowledge in art—that of form. But as form, in landscape, implies vast bulk and space, the use of the tints which enabled him best to express them, was actually auxiliary to the mere drawing; and, therefore, not only permissible, but even necessary, while more brilliant or varied tints were never indulged in, except when they might be introduced without the slightest danger of diverting his mind for an instant from his principal object. And, therefore, it will be generally found in the works of this period, that exactly in proportion to the importance and general toil of the composition, is the severity of the tint; and that the play of colour begins to show itself first in slight and small drawings, where he felt that he could easily secure all that he wanted in form.

Thus the *Crossing the Brook*, and such other elaborate and large compositions, are actually painted in nothing but grey, brown, and blue, with a point or two of severe local colour in the figures; but in the minor drawings, tender passages of complicated colour occur not unfrequently in easy places; and even before the year 1800 he begins to introduce it with evident joyfulness and longing in his rude and simple studies, just as a child, if it could be supposed to govern itself by a fully developed intellect, would cautiously, but with infinite pleasure, add now and then a tiny dish of fruit or other dangerous luxury to the simple order of its daily fare. Thus, in the foregrounds of his most severe drawings, we not unfrequently find him indulging in the luxury of a peacock; and it is impossible to express the joyfulness with which he seems to design its graceful form, and deepen with soft pencilling the bloom of its blue, after he has worked through the stern detail of his almost colourless drawing. A rainbow is another of his most frequently permitted indulgences; and we find him very early allowing the edges of his evening clouds to be touched with soft rose-colour or gold; while, whenever the hues of Nature in anywise fall into his system, and can be caught without a dangerous departure from it, he instantly throws his whole soul into the faithful rendering of them. Thus the usual brown tones of his foreground become warmed into sudden vigour, and are varied and enhanced with indescribable delight, when he finds himself by the shore of a moorland stream, where they truly express the stain of its golden rocks, and the darkness of its clear, Cairngorm-like pools, and the usual serenity of his aerial blue is enriched into the softness and depth of the sapphire, when it can deepen the distant slumber of some Highland lake, or temper the gloomy shadows of the evening upon its hills.

The system of his colour being thus simplified, he could address all the strength of his mind to the accumulation of facts of form; his choice of subject, and his methods of treatment, are therefore as various as his colour is simple; and it is not a little difficult to give the reader who is unacquainted with his works, an idea either of their infinitude of aims, on the one hand, or of the kind of feeling which pervades them all, on the other. No subject was too low or too high for him: we find him one day hard at work on a cock and hen, with their family of chickens in a farmyard;

and bringing all the refinement of his execution into play to express the texture of the plumage; next day he is drawing the Dragon of Colchis. One hour he is much interested in a gust of wind blowing away an old woman's cap; the next, he is painting the fifth plague of Egypt. Every landscape painter before him had acquired distinction by confining his efforts to one class of subject. Hobbima painted oaks; Ruysdael, waterfalls and copses; Cuyp, river or meadow scenes in quiet afternoons; Salvator and Poussin, such kind of mountain scenery as people could conceive, who lived in towns in the seventeenth century. But I am well persuaded that if all the works of Turner, up to the year 1820, were divided into classes (as he has himself divided them in the *Liber Studiorum*), no preponderance could be assigned to one class over another. There is architecture, including a large number of formal "gentlemen's seats," I suppose drawings commissioned by the owners; then lowland pastoral scenery of every kind, including nearly all farming operations—ploughing, harrowing, hedging, and ditching, felling trees, sheep-washing, and I know not what else; then all kinds of town life—court-yards of inns, starting of mail coaches, interiors of shops, house-buildings, fairs, elections, etc.; then all kinds of inner domestic life—interiors of rooms, studies of costumes, of still life, and heraldry, including multitudes of symbolical vignettes; then marine scenery of every kind, full of local incident; every kind of boat and method of fishing for particular fish, being specifically drawn, round the whole coast of England—pilchard fishing at St. Ives, whiting fishing at Margate, herring at Loch Fyne; and all kinds of shipping, including studies of every separate part of the vessels, and many marine battle pieces, two in particular of Trafalgar, both of high importance,—one of the *Victory* after the battle, now in Greenwich Hospital; another of the *Death of Nelson*, in his own gallery; then all kinds of mountain scenery, some idealised into compositions, others of definite localities; together with classical compositions, Romes and Carthages and such others, by the myriad, with mythological, historical, or allegorical figures,—nymphs, monsters, and spectres; heroes and divinities.\*

What general feeling, it may be asked incredulously, can

\* I shall give a *catalogue raisonné* of all this in the third volume of *Modern Painters*.

possibly pervade all this? This, the greatest of all feelings—an utter forgetfulness of self. Throughout the whole period with which we are at present concerned, Turner appears as a man of sympathy absolutely infinite—a sympathy so all-embracing, that I know nothing but that of Shakespeare comparable with it. A soldier's wife resting by the roadside is not beneath it; Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, watching the dead bodies of her sons, not above it. Nothing can possibly be so mean as that it will not interest his whole mind, and carrying away his whole heart; nothing so great or solemn but that he can raise himself into harmony with it; and it is impossible to prophesy of him at any moment, whether, the next, he will be in laughter or in tears.

This is the root of the man's greatness; and it follows as a matter of course that this sympathy must give him a subtle power of expression, even of the characters of mere material things, such as no other painter ever possessed. The man who can best feel the difference between rudeness and tenderness in humanity, perceives also more difference between the branches of an oak and a willow than any one else would; and, therefore, necessarily the most striking character of the drawings themselves is the speciality of whatever they represent—the thorough stiffness of what is stiff, and grace of what is graceful, and vastness of what is vast; but through and beyond all this, the condition of the mind of the painter himself is easily enough discoverable by comparison of a large number of the drawings. It is singularly serene and peaceful: in itself quite passionless, though entering with ease into the external passion which it contemplates. By the effort of its will it sympathises with tumult or distress, even in their extremes, but there is no tumult, no sorrow in itself, only a chastened and exquisitely peaceful cheerfulness, deeply meditative; touched, without loss of its own perfect balance, by sadness on the one side, and stooping to playfulness upon the other. I shall never cease to regret the destruction, by fire, now several years ago, of a drawing which always seemed to me to be the perfect image of the painter's mind at this period,—the drawing of Brignal Church near Rokeby, of which a feeble idea may still be gathered from the engraving (in the Yorkshire series). The spectator stands on the "Brignal banks," looking down into the glen at twilight;

the sky is still full of soft rays, though the sun is gone, and the Greta glances brightly in the valley, singing its even-song; two white clouds, following each other, move without wind through the hollows of the ravine, and others lie couched on the far away moorlands; every leaf of the woods is still in the delicate air; a boy's kite, incapable of rising, has become entangled in their branches, he is climbing to recover it; and just behind it in the picture, almost indicated by it, the lowly church is seen in its secluded field between the rocks and the stream; and around it the low churchyard wall, and the few white stones which mark the resting places of those who can climb the rocks no more, nor hear the river sing as it passes.

There are many other existing drawings which indicate the same character of mind, though I think none so touching or so beautiful: yet they are not, as I said above, more numerous than those which express his sympathy with sublimer or more active scenes; but they are almost always marked by a tenderness of execution, and have a look of being beloved in every part of them, which shows them to be the truest expression of his own feelings.

One other characteristic of his mind at this period remains to be noticed—its reverence for talent in others. Not the reverence which acts upon the practices of men as if they were the laws of Nature, but that which is ready to appreciate the power, and receive the assistance, of every mind which has been previously employed in the same direction, so far as its teaching seems to be consistent with the great textbook of Nature itself. Turner thus studied almost every preceding landscape painter, chiefly Claude, Poussin, Vandewelde, Louthembourg, and Wilson. It was probably by the Sir George Beaumonts and other feeble conventionalists of the period, that he was persuaded to devote his attention to the works of these men; and his having done so will be thought, a few scores of years hence, evidence of perhaps the greatest modesty ever shown by a man of original power. Modesty at once admirable and unfortunate, for the study of the works of Vandewelde and Claude was productive of unmixed mischief to him: he spoiled many of his marine pictures, as for instance Lord Ellesmere's, by imitation of the former; and from the latter learned a false ideal, which, confirmed by the notions of Greek art prevalent in London in the beginning of this



century, has manifested itself in many vulgarities in his composition pictures, vulgarities which may perhaps be best expressed by the general term "Twickenham Classicism," as consisting principally in conceptions of ancient or of rural life such as have influenced the erection of most of our suburban villas. From Nicolo Poussin and Louthembourg he seems to have derived advantage; perhaps also from Wilson; and much in his subsequent travels from far higher men, especially Tintoret and Paul Veronese. I have myself heard him speaking with singular delight of the putting in of the beech leaves in the upper right-hand corner of Titian's *Peter Martyr*. I cannot in any of his works trace the slightest influence of Salvator; and I am not surprised at it, for though Salvator was a man of far higher powers than either Vandewelde or Claude, he was a wilful and gross caricaturist. Turner would condescend to be helped by feeble men, but could not be corrupted by false men. Besides, he had never himself seen classical life, and Claude was represented to him as competent authority for it. But he *had* seen mountains and torrents, and knew therefore that Salvator could not paint them.

One of the most characteristic drawings of this period fortunately bears a date, 1818, and brings us within two years of another dated drawing, no less characteristic of what I shall henceforward call Turner's Second period. It is in the possession of Mr. Hawkesworth Fawkes of Farnley, one of Turner's earliest and truest friends; and bears the inscription, unusually conspicuous, heaving itself up and down over the eminences of the foreground—"PASSAGE OF MONT CENIS. J. M. W. TURNER, January 15th, 1820."

The scene is on the summit of the pass close to the hospice, or what seems to have been a hospice at that time,—I do not remember any such at present,—a small square-built house, built as if partly for a fortress, with a detached flight of stone steps in front of it, and a kind of drawbridge to the door. This building, about 400 or 500 yards off, is seen in a dim, ashy grey against the light, which by help of a violent blast of mountain wind has broken through the depth of clouds which hangs upon the crags. There is no sky, properly so called, nothing but this roof of drifting cloud; but neither is there any weight of darkness—the high air is too thin for it,—all savage, howling, and luminous with cold, the massy bases of the

granite hills jutting out here and there grimly through the snow wreaths. There is a desolate-looking refuge on the left, with its number 16, marked on it in long ghastly figures, and the wind is drifting the snow off the roof and through its windows in a frantic whirl; the near ground is all wan with half-thawed, half-trampled snow; a diligence in front, whose horses, unable to face the wind, have turned right round with fright, its passengers struggling to escape, jammed in the window; a little farther on is another carriage off the road, some figures pushing at its wheels and its driver at the horses' heads, pulling and lashing with all his strength, his lifted arm stretched out against the light of the distance, though too far off for the whip to be seen.

Now I am perfectly certain that any one thoroughly accustomed to the earlier works of the painter, and shown this picture for the first time, would be struck by two altogether new characters in it.

The first, a seeming enjoyment of the excitement of the scene, totally different from the contemplative philosophy with which it would formerly have been regarded. Every incident of motion and of energy is seized upon with indescribable delight, and every line of the composition animated with a force and fury which are now no longer the mere expression of a contemplated external truth, but have origin in some inherent feeling in the painter's mind.

The second, that although the subject is one in itself almost incapable of colour, and although, in order to increase the wildness of the impression, all brilliant local colour has been refused even where it might easily have been introduced, as in the figures; yet in the low minor key which has been chosen, the melodies of colour have been elaborated to the utmost possible pitch, so as to become a leading, instead of a subordinate, element in the composition; the subdued warm hues of the granite promontories, the dull stone colour of the walls of the buildings, clearly opposed, even in shade, to the grey of the snow wreaths heaped against them, and the faint greens and ghastly blues of the glacier ice, being all expressed with delicacies of transition utterly unexampled in any previous drawings.

These, accordingly, are the chief characteristics of the works of Turner's second period, as distinguished from the

first,—a new energy inherent in the mind of the painter, diminishing the repose and exalting the force and fire of his conceptions, and the presence of Colour, as at least an essential, and often a principal, element of design.

Not that it is impossible, or even unusual, to find drawings of serene subject, and perfectly quiet feeling, among the compositions of this period; but the repose is in them, just as the energy and tumult were in the earlier period, an external quality, which the painter images by an effort of the will: it is no longer a character inherent in himself. The *Ulleswater*, in the England series, is one of those which are in most perfect peace; in the *Cowes*, the silence is only broken by the dash of the boat's oars, and in the *Alnwick* by a stag drinking; but in at least nine drawings out of ten, either sky, water, or figures are in rapid motion, and the grandest drawings are almost always those which have even violent action in one or other, or in all; *e.g.* high force of Tees, Coventry, Llanthony, Salisbury, Llanberis, and such others.

The colour is, however, a more absolute distinction; and we must return to Mr. Fawkes's collection in order to see how the change in it was effected. That such a change would take place at one time or other was of course to be securely anticipated, the conventional system of the first period being, as above stated, merely a means of study. But the immediate cause was the journey of the year 1820. As might be guessed from the legend on the drawing above described, "Passage of Mont Cenis, January 15th, 1820," that drawing represents what happened on the day in question to the painter himself. He passed the Alps then in the winter of 1820; and either in the previous or subsequent summer, but on the same journey, he made a series of sketches on the Rhine, in body colour, now in Mr. Fawkes's collection. Every one of those sketches is the almost instantaneous record of an *effect* of colour or atmosphere, taken strictly from Nature, the drawing and the details of every subject being comparatively subordinate, and the colour nearly as principal as the light and shade had been before,—certainly the leading feature, though the light and shade are always exquisitely harmonised with it. And naturally, as the colour becomes the leading object, those times of day are chosen in which it is most lovely; and whereas before, at least five out of six of Turner's drawings represented ordinary daylight, we now find his attention

directed constantly to the evening: and, for the first time, we have those rosy lights upon the hills, those gorgeous falls of sun through flaming heavens, those solemn twilights, with the blue moon rising as the western sky grows dim, which have ever since been the themes of his mightiest thoughts.

I have no doubt, that the *immediate* reason of this change was the impression made upon him by the colours of the continental skies. When he first travelled on the Continent (1800), he was comparatively a young student; not yet able to draw form as he wanted, he was forced to give all his thoughts and strength to this primary object. But now he was free to receive other impressions; the time was come for perfecting his art, and the first sunset which he saw on the Rhine taught him that all previous landscape art was vain and valueless, that in comparison with natural colour, the things that had been called paintings were mere ink and charcoal, and that all precedent and all authority must be cast away at once, and trodden under foot. He cast them away: the memories of Vandewelde and Claude were at once weeded out of the great mind they had encumbered; they and all the rubbish of the schools together with them; the waves of the Rhine swept them away for ever; and a new dawn rose over the rocks of the Siebengebirge.

There was another motive at work, which rendered the change still more complete. His fellow artists were already conscious enough of his superior power in drawing, and their best hope was, that he might not be able to colour. They had begun to express this hope loudly enough for it to reach his ears. The engraver of one of his most important marine pictures told me, not long ago, that one day about the period in question, Turner came into his room to examine the progress of the plate, not having seen his own picture for several months. It was one of his dark early pictures, but in the foreground was a little piece of luxury, a pearly fish wrought into hues like those of an opal. He stood before the picture for some moments; then laughed, and pointed joyously to the fish;—"They say that Turner can't colour!" and turned away.

Under the force of these various impulses the change was total. *Every subject thenceforward was primarily conceived in colour*; and no engraving ever gave the slightest idea of any drawing of this period.

The artists who had any perception of the truth were in

despair; the Beaumontites, classicalists, and "owl species" in general, in as much indignation as their dulness was capable of. They had deliberately closed their eyes to all Nature, and had gone on inquiring "Where do you put your brown 'tree'?" A vast revelation was made to them at once, enough to have dazzled any one; but to *them*, light unendurable as incomprehensible. They "did to the moon complain," in one vociferous, unanimous, continuous "Tu whoo." Shrieking rose from all dark places at the same instant, just the same kind of shrieking that is now raised against the Pre-Raphaelites. Those glorious old Arabian Nights, how true they are! Mocking and whispering, and abuse loud and low by turns, from all the black stones beside the road, when one living soul is toiling up the hill to get the golden water. Mocking and whispering, that he may look back, and become a black stone like themselves.

Turner looked not back, but he went on in such a temper as a strong man must be in, when he is forced to walk with his fingers in his ears. He retired into himself; he could look no longer for help, or counsel, or sympathy from any one; and the spirit of defiance in which he was forced to labour led him sometimes into violences, from which the slightest expression of sympathy would have saved him. The new energy that was upon him, and the utter isolation into which he was driven were both alike dangerous and many drawings of the time show the evil effects of both; some of them being hasty, wild, or experimental, and others little more than magnificent expressions of defiance of public opinion.

But all have this noble virtue—they are in everything his own: there are no more reminiscences of dead masters, no more trials of skill in the manner of Claude or Poussin; every faculty of his soul is fixed upon Nature only, as he saw her, or as he remembered her.

I have spoken above of his gigantic memory: it is especially necessary to notice this, in order that we may understand the kind of grasp which a man of real imagination takes of all things that are once brought within his reach—grasp thenceforth not to be relaxed for ever.

On looking over any catalogues of his works, or of particular series of them, we shall notice the recurrence of the same subject two, three, or even many times. In any other artist this would be nothing remarkable. Probably most

modern landscape painters multiply a favourite subject twenty, thirty, or sixty fold, putting the shadows and the clouds in different places, and "inventing," as they are pleased to call it, a new "effect" every time. But if we examine the successions of Turner's subjects, we shall find them either the records of a succession of impressions actually received by him at some favourite locality, or else repetitions of one impression received in early youth, and again and again realised as his increasing powers enabled him to do better justice to it. In either case we shall find them records of *seen facts*; never compositions in his room to fill up a favourite outline.

For instance, every traveller, at least every traveller of thirty years' standing, must love Calais, the place where he first felt himself in a strange world. Turner evidently loved it excessively. I have never catalogued his studies of Calais, but I remember, at this moment, five: there is first the *Pas de Calais*, a very large oil painting, which is what he saw in broad daylight as he crossed over, when he got near the French side. It is a careful study of French fishing boats running for the shore before the wind, with the picturesque old city in the distance. Then there is the *Calais Harbour* in the *Liber Studiorum*: that is what he saw just as he was going into the harbour,—a heavy brig warping out, and very likely to get in his way or run against the pier, and bad weather coming on. Then there is the *Calais Pier*, a large painting, engraved some years ago by Mr. Lupton: \* that is what he saw when he had landed, and ran back directly to the pier to see what had become of the brig. The weather had got still worse, the fishwomen were being blown about in a distressful manner on the pier head, and some more fishing boats were running in with all speed. Then there is the *Fortrouge*, Calais: that is what he saw after he had been home to Dessein's, and dined, and went out again in the evening to walk on the sands, the tide being down. He had never seen such a waste of sands before, and it made an impression on him. The shrimp girls were all scattered over them too, and moved about in white spots on the wild shore; and the storm had lulled a little, and there was a sunset—such a sunset,—and the bars of Fortrouge seen against it, skeleton-wise. He did not paint that directly; thought over it,—painted it a long while afterwards.

\* The plate was, however, never published.

Then there is the vignette in the illustrations to Scott. That is what he saw as he was going home, meditatively; and the revolving lighthouse came blazing out upon him suddenly, and disturbed him. He did not like that so much; made a vignette of it, however, when he was asked to do a bit of Calais, twenty or thirty years afterwards, having already done all the rest.

Turner never told me all this, but any one may see it if he will compare the pictures. They might, possibly, not be impressions of a single day, but of two days or three; though in all human probability they were seen just as I have stated them; \* but they are records of successive impressions, as plainly written as ever traveller's diary. All of them pure veracities. Therefore immortal.

I could multiply these series almost indefinitely from the rest of his works. What is curious, some of them have a kind of private mark running through all the subjects. Thus I know three drawings of Scarborough, and all of them have a starfish in the foreground: I do not remember any others of his marine subjects which have a starfish.

The other kind of repetition—the recurrence to one early impression—is however still more remarkable. In the collection of F. H. Bale, Esq., there is a small drawing of Llanthony Abbey. It is in his boyish manner, its date probably about 1795; evidently a sketch from Nature, finished at home. It had been a showery day; the hills were partially concealed by the rain, and gleams of sunshine breaking out at intervals. A man was fishing in the mountain stream. The young Turner sought a place of some shelter under the bushes; made his sketch, took great pains when he got home to imitate the rain, as he best could; added his child's luxury of a rainbow; put in the very bush under which he had taken shelter, and the fisherman, a somewhat ill-jointed and long-legged fisherman, in the courtly short breeches which were the fashion of the time.

Some thirty years afterwards, with all his powers in their strongest training, and after the total change in his feelings and principles which I have endeavoured to describe, he undertook the series of "England and Wales," and in that series introduced the subject of Llanthony Abbey.

\* And the more probably because Turner was never fond of staying long at any place, and was least of all likely to make a pause of two or three days at the beginning of his journey.

And behold, he went back to his boy's sketch and boy's thought. He kept the very bushes in their places, but brought the fisherman to the other side of the river, and put him, in somewhat less courtly dress, under their shelter, instead of himself. And then he set all his gained strength and new knowledge at work on the well-remembered shower of rain, that had fallen thirty years before, to do it better. The resultant drawing\* is one of the very noblest of his second period.

Another of the drawings of the England series, *Ulleswater*, is the repetition of one in Mr. Fawkes's collection, which, by the method of its execution, I should conjecture to have been executed about the year 1808 or 1810: at all events, it is a very quiet drawing of the first period. The lake is quite calm; the western hills in grey shadow, the eastern massed in light. Helvellyn rising like a mist between them, all being mirrored in the calm water. Some thin and slightly evanescent cows are standing in the shallow water in front; a boat floats motionless about a hundred yards from the shore: the foreground is of broken rocks, with some lovely pieces of copse on the right and left.

This was evidently Turner's record of a quiet evening by the shore of Ulleswater, but it was a feeble one. He could not at that time render the sunset colours: he went back to it therefore in the England series, and painted it again with his new power. The same hills are there, the same shadows, the same cows,—they had stood in his mind, on the same spot, for twenty years,—the same boat, the same rocks, only the copse is cut away—it interfered with the masses of his colour: some figures are introduced bathing, and what was grey, and feeble gold in the first drawing, becomes purple, and burning rose-colour in the last.

• But perhaps one of the most curious examples is in the series of subjects from Winchelsea. That in the *Liber Studiorum*, *Winchelsea, Sussex*, bears date 1812, and its figures consist of a soldier speaking to a woman, who is resting on the bank beside the road. There is another small subject, with Winchelsea in the distance, of which the engraving bears date 1817. It has *two* women with bundles, and *two* soldiers toiling along the embankment in the plain, and a baggage waggon in the distance.

\* Vide *Modern Painters*, Part II. Sect. III. Chap. IV. § 14.



Neither of these seems to have satisfied him, and at last he did another for the England series, of which the engraving bears date 1830. There is now a regiment on the march; the baggage waggon is there, having got no farther on in the thirteen years, but one of the women is tired, and has fainted on the bank; another is supporting her against her bundle, and giving her drink; a third sympathetic woman is added, and the two soldiers have stopped, and one is drinking from his canteen.

Nor is it merely of entire scenes, or of particular incidents that Turner's memory is thus tenacious. The slightest passages of colour or arrangement that have pleased him—the fork of a bough, the casting of a shadow, the fracture of a stone—will be taken up again and again, and strangely worked into new relations with other thoughts. There is a single sketch from Nature in one of the portfolios at Farnley, of a common wood-walk on the estate, which has furnished passages to no fewer than three of the most elaborate compositions in the *Liber Studiorum*.

I am thus tedious in dwelling on Turner's powers of memory, because I wish it to be thoroughly seen how all his greatness, all his infinite luxuriance of invention, depends on his taking possession of everything that he sees,—on his grasping all, and losing hold of nothing,—on his forgetting himself, and forgetting nothing else. I wish it to be understood how every great man paints what he sees or did see, his greatness being indeed little else than his intense sense of fact. And thus Pre-Raphaelitism and Raphaelitism, and Turnerism, are all one and the same, so far as education can influence them. They are different in their choice, different in their faculties, but all the same in this, that Raphael himself, so far as he was great, and all who preceded or followed him who ever were great, became so by painting the truths around them as they appeared to each man's own mind, not as he had been taught to see them, except by the God who made both him and them.

There is, however, one more characteristic of Turner's second period, on which I have still to dwell, especially with reference to what has been above advanced respecting the fallacy of overtoil; namely, the magnificent ease with which all is done when it is *successfully* done. For there are one or two drawings of this time which are *not* done easily. Turner had in these set himself to do a fine thing

to exhibit his powers; in the common phrase, to excel himself; so sure as he does this, the work is a failure. The worst drawings that have ever come from his hands are some of this second period, on which he has spent much time and laborious thought; drawings filled with incident from one side to the other, with skies stippled into morbid blue, and warm lights set against them in violent contrast; one of Bamborough Castle, a large water-colour, may be named as an example. But the truly noble works are those in which, without effort, he has expressed his thoughts as they came, and forgotten himself; and in these the outpouring of invention is not less miraculous than the swiftness and obedience of the mighty hand that expresses it. Any one who examines the drawings may see the evidence of this facility, in the strange freshness and sharpness of every touch of colour; but when the multitude of delicate touches, with which all the aerial tones are worked, is taken into consideration, it would still appear impossible that the drawing could have been completed with *ease*, unless we had direct evidence on the matter: fortunately, it is not wanting. There is a drawing in Mr. Fawkes's collection of a man-of-war taking in stores: it is of the usual size of those of the England series, about sixteen inches by eleven: it does not appear one of the most highly finished, but is still farther removed from slightness. The hull of a first-rate occupies nearly one-half of the picture on the right, her bows towards the spectator, seen in sharp perspective from stem to stern, with all her portholes, guns, anchors, and lower rigging elaborately detailed; there are two other ships of the line in the middle distance, drawn with equal precision; a noble breezy sea dancing against their broad bows, full of delicate drawing in its waves; a store-ship beneath the hull of the larger vessel, and several other boats, and a complicated cloudy sky. It might appear no small exertion of mind to draw the detail of all this shipping down to the smallest ropes, from memory, in the drawing-room of a mansion in the middle of Yorkshire, even if considerable time had been given for the effort. But Mr. Fawkes sat beside the painter from the first stroke to the last. Turner took a piece of blank paper one morning after breakfast, outlined his ships, finished the drawing in three hours, and went out to shoot.

Let this single fact be quietly meditated upon by our

ordinary painters, and they will see the truth of what was above asserted,—that if a great thing can be done at all, it can be done easily; and let them not torment themselves with twisting of compositions this way and that, and repeating, and experimenting, and scene-shifting. If a man can compose at all, he can compose at once, or rather he must compose in spite of himself. And this is the reason of that silence which I have kept in most of my works on the subject of Composition. Many critics, especially the architects, have found fault with me for not “teaching people how to arrange masses”; for not “attributing sufficient importance to composition.” Alas! I attribute far more importance to it than they do;—so much importance that I should just as soon think of sitting down to teach a man how to write a *Divina Commedia*, or *King Lear*, as how to “compose,” in the true sense, a single building or picture. The marvellous stupidity of this age of lecturers is, that they do not see that what they call, “principles of composition,” are mere principles of common sense in everything, as well as in pictures and buildings;—A picture is to have a principal light? Yes; and so a dinner is to have a principal dish, and an oration a principal point, and an air of music a principal note, and every man a principal object. A picture is to have harmony of relation among its parts? Yes; and so is a speech well uttered, and an action well ordered, and a company well chosen, and a ragout well mixed. Composition! As if a man were not composing every moment of his life, well or ill, and would not do it instinctively in his picture as well as elsewhere, if he could. Composition of this lower or common kind is of exactly the same importance in a picture that it is in anything else,—no more. It is well that a man should say what he has to say in good order and sequence, but the main thing is to say it truly. And yet we go on preaching to our pupils as if to have a principal light was everything, and so cover our academy walls with Shacabac feasts, wherein the courses are indeed well ordered, but the dishes empty.

It is not, however, only in invention that men overwork themselves, but in execution also; and here I have a word to say to the Pre-Raphaelites specially. They are working too hard. There is evidence in failing portions of their pictures, showing that they have wrought so, long

upon them that their very sight has failed for weariness, and that the hand refused any more to obey the heart. And, besides this, there are certain qualities of drawing which they miss from over-carefulness. For, let them be assured, there is a great truth lurking in that common desire of men to see things done in what they call a "masterly," or "bold," or "broad," manner: a truth oppressed and abused, like almost every other in this world, but an eternal one nevertheless; and whatever mischief may have followed from men's looking for nothing else but this facility of execution, and supposing that a picture was assuredly all right if only it were done with broad dashes of the brush, still the truth remains the same:—that because it is not intended that men shall torment or weary themselves with any earthly labour, it is appointed that the noblest results should only be attainable by a certain ease and decision of manipulation. I only wish people understood this much of sculpture, as well as of painting, and could see that the finely finished statue is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, a far more vulgar work than that which shows rough signs of the right hand laid to the workman's hammer: but at all events, in painting it is felt by all men, and justly felt. The freedom of the lines of Nature can only be represented by a similar freedom in the hand that follows them; there are curves in the flow of the hair, and in the form of the features, and in the muscular outline of the body, which can in no wise be caught but by a sympathetic freedom in the stroke of the pencil. I do not care what example is taken, be it the most subtle and careful work of Leonardo himself, there will be found a play and power and ease in the outlines, which no *slow* effort could ever imitate. And if the Pre-Raphaelites do not understand how this kind of power, in its highest perfection, may be united with the most severe rendering of all other orders of truth, and especially of those with which they themselves have most sympathy, let them look at the drawings of John Lewis.

These then are the principal lessons which we have to learn from Turner, in his second or central period of labour. There is one more, however, to be received; and that is a warning; for towards the close of it, what with doing small conventional vignettes for publishers, making showy drawings from sketches taken by other people of places he had

never seen, and touching up the bad engravings from his works submitted to him almost every day,—engravings utterly destitute of animation, and which had to be raised into a specious brilliancy by scratching them over with white, spotty, lights, he gradually got inured to many conventionalities, and even falsities; and, having trusted for ten or twelve years almost entirely to his memory and invention, living I believe mostly in London, and receiving a new sensation only from the burning of the Houses of Parliament, he painted many pictures between 1830 and 1840 altogether unworthy of him. But he was not thus to close his career.

In the summer either of 1840 or 1841, he undertook another journey into Switzerland. It was then at least forty years since he had first seen the Alps; (*The Source of the Arveron*, in Mr. Fawkes's collection, which could not have been painted till he had seen the thing itself, bears date 1800,) and the direction of his journey in 1840 marks his fond memory of that earliest one; for, if we look over the Swiss studies and drawings executed in his first period, we shall be struck by his fondness for the pass of the St. Gothard; the most elaborate drawing in the Farnley collection is one of the Lake of Lucerne from Fluelen; and, counting the *Liber Studiorum* subjects, there are, to my knowledge, six compositions taken at the same period from the pass of St. Gothard, and, probably, several others are in existence. The valleys of Sallenche and Chamouni, and Lake of Geneva, are the only other Swiss scenes which seem to have made very profound impressions on him.

He returned in 1841 to Lucerne; walked up Mont Pilate on foot, crossed the St. Gothard, and returned by Lausanne and Geneva. He made a large number of coloured sketches on this journey, and realised several of them on his return. The drawings thus produced are different from all that had preceded them, and are the first which belong definitely to what I shall henceforward call his Third period.

The perfect repose of his youth had returned to his mind, while the faculties of imagination and execution appeared in renewed strength; all conventionality being done away by the force of the impression which he had received from the Alps, after his long separation from them. The drawings are marked by a peculiar largeness and simplicity of thought: most of them by deep serenity, passing into

melancholy; all by a richness of colour, such as he had never before conceived. They, and the works done in following years, bear the same relation to those of the rest of his life that the colours of sunset do to those of the day; and will be recognised, in a few years more, as the noblest landscapes ever yet conceived by human intellect.

Such has been the career of the greatest painter of this century. Many a century may pass away before there rises such another; but what greatness any among us may be capable of, will, at least, be best attained by following in his path;—by beginning in all quietness and hopefulness to use whatever powers we may possess to represent the things around us as we see and feel them; trusting to the close of life to give the perfect crown to the course of its labours, and knowing assuredly that the determination of the degree in which watchfulness is to be exalted into invention, rests with a higher will than our own. And, if not greatness, at least a certain good, is thus to be achieved; for though I have above spoken of the mission of the more humble artist, as if it were merely to be subservient to that of the antiquarian or the man of science, there is an ulterior aspect, in which it is not subservient, but superior. Every archæologist, every natural philosopher, knows that there is a peculiar rigidity of mind brought on by long devotion to logical and analytical inquiries. Weak men, giving themselves to such studies, are utterly hardened by them, and become incapable of understanding anything nobler, or even of feeling the value of the results to which they lead. But even the best men are in a sort injured by them, and pay a definite price, as in most other matters, for definite advantages. They gain a peculiar strength, but lose in tenderness, elasticity, and impressibility. The man who has gone, hammer in hand, over the surface of a romantic country, feels no longer, in the mountain ranges he has so laboriously explored, the sublimity or mystery with which they were veiled when he first beheld them, and with which they are adorned in the mind of the passing traveller. In his more informed conception, they arrange themselves like a dissected model: where another man would be awestruck by the magnificence of the precipice, he sees nothing but the emergence of a fossiliferous rock, familiarised already to his imagination as extending in a shallow stratum, over a perhaps uninteresting district; where the unlearned

spectator would be touched with strong emotion by the aspect of the snowy summits which rise in the distance, he sees only the culminating points of a metamorphic formation, with an uncomfortable web of fan-like fissures radiating, in his imagination, through their centres.\* That in the grasp he has obtained of the inner relations of all these things to the universe, and to man, that in the views which have been opened to him of natural energies such as no human mind would have ventured to conceive, and of past states of being, each in some new way bearing witness to the unity of purpose and everlastingly consistent providence of the Maker of all things, he has received reward well worthy the sacrifice, I would not for an instant deny; but the sense of the loss is not less painful to him if his mind be rightly constituted; and it would be with infinite gratitude that he would regard the man, who, retaining in his delineation of natural scenery a fidelity to the facts of science so rigid as to make his work at once acceptable and credible to the most sternly critical intellect, should yet invest its features again with the sweet veil of their daily aspect; should make them dazzling with the splendour of wandering light, and involve them in the unsearchableness of stormy obscurity; should restore to the divided anatomy its visible vitality of operation, clothe the naked crags with soft forests, enrich the mountain ruins with bright pastures, and lead the thoughts from the monotonous recurrence of the phenomena of the physical world, to the sweet interests and sorrows of human life and death.

\* This state of mind appears to have been the only one which Wordsworth had been able to discern in men of science; and in disdain of which, he wrote that short-sighted passage in the *Excursion*, Book III. l. 165-190, which is, I think, the only one in the whole range of his works which his true friends would have desired to see blotted out. What else has been found fault with as feeble or superfluous, is not so in the intense distinctive relief which it gives to his character. But these lines are written in mere ignorance of the matter they treat; in mere want of sympathy with the men they describe: for, observe, though the passage is put into the mouth of the Solitary, it is fully confirmed, and even rendered more scornful, by the speech which follows.

NOTES ON  
THE TURNER GALLERY  
AT  
MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

1856-7









## NOTES ON THE TURNER GALLERY

THE works of Turner are broadly referable to four periods, during each of which the painter wrought with a different aim, or with different powers.

In the first period, 1800-1820, he laboured as a student, imitating successively the works of the various masters who excelled in the qualities he desired to attain himself.

In his second period, 1820-1835, he worked on the principles which during his studentship he had discovered; imitating no one, but frequently endeavouring to do what the then accepted theories of art required of all artists—namely, to produce beautiful compositions or ideals, instead of transcripts of natural fact.

In his third period, 1835-1845, his own strong instincts conquered the theories of art altogether. He thought little of “ideals,” but reproduced, as far as he could, the simple impressions he received from Nature, associating them with his own deepest feelings.

In 1845 his health gave way, and his mind and sight partially failed. The pictures painted in the last five years of his life are of wholly inferior value. He died in 1851.

These, then, being the broad divisions of his career, we will take the pictures belonging to each in their order; first dwelling a little on the general characteristics of each epoch.

### I. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIRST PERIOD, OR THAT OF STUDENTSHIP

Generally, the pictures belonging to this time are notable for their grey or brown colour, and firm, sometimes heavy, laying on of the paint. And this for two reasons. Every great artist, without exception, needs, and feels that he needs, to learn to express the *forms* of things before he can express the *colours* of things; and it much facilitates this

expression of form if the learner will use at first few and simple colours. And the paint is laid on firmly, partly in mere unskilfulness (it being much easier to lay a heavy touch than a light one), but partly also in the struggle of the learner against indecision, just as the notes are struck heavily in early practice (if useful and progressive) on a pianoforte. But besides these reasons, the kind of landscapes which were set before Turner as his models, and which, during nearly the whole of this epoch, he was striving to imitate, were commonly sober in colour, and heavy in touch. Brown was thought the proper colour for trees, grey for shadows, and fog-yellow for high lights. "Child Roland to the dark tower came," and had to clear his way through all the fog; twenty years of his life passed before he could fairly get leave to see. It follows that the evidences of invention, or of new perception, must be rarer in the pictures of this period than in subsequent ones. It was not so much to think brilliantly, as to draw accurately, that Turner was trying; not so much to invent new things, as to rival the old. His own perceptions are traceable only by fits and fragments through the more or less successful imitation.

It is to be observed, however, that his originality is enough proved by the fact that these pictures of his studentship, though they nearly all are imitations, are none of them *copies*. Nearly every other great master in his youth copied some of the works of other masters; but Turner, when he wanted to understand a master's merits, instead of copying, painted an original picture in the required style. Instead of copying a Vandewelde, he went to the sea, and painted *that*, in Vandewelde's way. Instead of copying a Poussin, he went to the mountains, and painted *them*, in Poussin's way. And from the lips of the mountains and the sea themselves, he learned one or two things which neither Vandewelde nor Poussin could have told him; until at last, continually finding these sayings of the hills and waves on the whole the soundest kind of sayings, he came to listen to no others.

## II. PICTURES OF THE FIRST PERIOD

## 454. MOONLIGHT. A STUDY AT MILLBANK \* (1797).

It will be seen by reference to the classification of Turner's work, just given, that I do not consider the painter to have been in existence before the year 1800. That is to say, there is nothing in his drawings before that year, which gives definite promise of any extraordinary excellence: precision of line, watchful sympathy with casual incident, and a delicate, though feeble rendering of some effects of atmospheric gradation, are all that can be usually traced in them: his contemporary oil paintings are much rarer, and I cannot give any account of their general character. This example is an imitation of the Dutch moonlights, but closely studied from the real moon, and very true in expression of its glow towards the horizon: for the rest, its heavy and leaden sky, feeble execution, and total absence of apparent choice or arrangement in the form of boats and buildings, as they make it singular in demerit, so they make it precious as an example of the unpresumptuous labour of a great man in his youth. And the Trustees have judged well in showing it among these mighty pictures: for the sorrowful moonlight on the Thames and its gloomy city, as it was his youth's study, was one of the last sights which sank before his dying eyes.

## 466. VIEW IN WALES (about 1800).

This picture is rightly described in the Catalogue† as “a direct imitation of Wilson”; but Wilson is treated with injustice in the next sentence: “it might be mistaken for a work of that master.” It does not yet, in any single point, approximate to Wilson's power—nor, even in his strongest time, did Turner (in oil) give serenely warm tones of atmosphere with Wilson's skill. This work is a sufficiently poor imitation of Wilson's commonest qualities; and it is interesting to see what those common qualities are. This

\* Exhibited in the large room of the old Royal Academy in 1797. At this time Turner was studying architecture chiefly. The titles of the other subjects exhibited that year were:—

279. Fishermen coming ashore at sunset, previous to a gale.

427. Transept of Ewenny Priory, Glamorganshire.

450. Choir of Salisbury Cathedral.

464. Ely Cathedral. South Transept.

517. North porch of Salisbury Cathedral.

† Turner Gallery, with Catalogue of the Vernon collection (Clarke & Co.), sold by permission of the Trustees.

professes to be a view in Wales; but, because it is to be idealised, and like Wilson, it has not a single Welsh character. The ground is not rocky—but composed, in the classical manner, of lumps of clay; the river is not a mountain stream, but a classical stream, or what is called by head gardeners a “piece of water”; the hills are neither moorland, nor crag, nor pasture-land, but the Italian tufted pattern; and the building on the top of them is turned from a plain Welsh church into that remarkable tower with no bells in it, nor door, nor window, which served all the old landscapists from generation to generation;—Claude and Domenichino—Cuyp, and Wouvermans, and Berghem—Tempesta and Vernet—using it one after another, like a child’s coral, to cut their teeth upon. The white figures are set, we observe, in an orthodox manner, to relieve the principal dark, by precept and example of Sir Geo. Beaumont, Sir F. Bourgeois, etc. A few somewhat careless scratches in the foreground, to the right, reveal, at last, a little beneficent impatience—for which Heaven be praised. For there is an impatience of genius as well as a patience—and woe worth the man who could have painted such a picture as this without being tired of it!

468. VIEW ON CLAPHAM COMMON (1802?).

The manner of this painting, though still leaning to Wilson’s, is much complicated with that of Morland, whom Turner was studying about this time, very admiringly. The somewhat affected rolling and loading of the colour in the sky is founded altogether on Morland. Nevertheless, this picture is really a study from Nature; possessing therefore some noble qualities of tree form. It is evidently left unfinished in the foreground.

471. JASON (1802).

I have not seen this picture for several years, and cannot, in its present position, see it at all; but I remember it as very characteristic of Turner’s increasing power in his first period, and showing high imaginative faculties. In very sunny days a keen-eyed spectator may discern, even where the picture hangs now, something in the middle of it like the arch of an ill-built drain. This is a coil of the dragon beginning to unroll himself. The passage in the note\*

\* “In Retsch’s illustrations to Schiller’s *Kampf mit dem Drachen*, we have an instance, feeble indeed, but characteristic, and suited to our present purpose, of the detailing and finishing action of the fancy. The

from the second volume of *Modern Painters* refers to the reminiscence of this picture in the *Liber Studiorum*; but it applies also, though not so strongly, to the picture itself, and will perhaps help the reader to enter better into Turner's meaning. It should, however, be added, that this showing only a part of the dragon's body, and thereby increasing our awe, is one of the instances in which Turner's mysticism first developed itself; just as the entire conception is the first notable evidence of the love of horror which formed one of the most important elements in his mind. Of which, more presently.

472. CALAIS PIER \* (1803).

This picture is the first which bears the sign manual and dragon is drawn from head to tail, vulture eyes, serpent teeth, forked tongue, fiery crest, armour, claws, and coils as grisly as may be; his den is drawn, and all the dead bones in it, and all the savage forest-country about it far and wide; we have him from the beginning of his career to the end, devouring, rampant, victorious over whole armies, gorged with death; we are present at all the preparations for his attack, see him receive his death-wound, and our anxieties are finally becalmed by seeing him lie peaceably dead on his back.

"All the time we have never got into the dragon's heart, we have never once had real sense of the creature's being; it is throughout nothing but an ugly composition of claw and scale. Now take up Turner's *Jason*, (*Liber Studiorum*) and observe how the imagination can concentrate all this, and infinitely more, into one moment. No far forest-country, no secret paths, nor cloven hills; nothing but a gleam of pale horizontal sky, that broods over pleasant places far away, and sends, through the wild overgrowth of the thicket, a ray of broken daylight into the hopeless pit. No flaunting plumes nor brandished lances but stern purpose in the turn of the crestless helmet, visible victory in the drawing back of the prepared right arm behind the steady point. No more claws, nor teeth, nor mains, nor stinging tails. We have the dragon, like everything else, *by the middle*. We need see no more of him. All his horror is in that fearful, slow, griding upheaval of the single coil. Spark after spark of it, ring after ring is sliding into the light, the slow glitter steals along him step by step, broader and broader, a lighting of the funeral lamps one by one, quicker and quicker; a moment more, and he is out upon us, all crash and blaze, among those broken trunks;—but he will be nothing then to what he is now." Vol. II. p. 320.

\* Turner's title of this picture in the Academy Catalogue of 1803, was *Calais Pier, with French Poissardes preparing for sea, an English packet arriving*. An elaborate engraving was undertaken from it by Mr. Lupton, and was carried forward with infinite patience nearly to completion, when Turner got tired of his own composition; doubled the height of the sails, pushed some of the boats further apart, and some nearer together; introduced half a dozen more; and at last brought the whole thing into irreparable confusion—in which it was left. Any person happening to possess a proof of this plate in its latter states, will be much edified by comparing it with the picture.



sign mental of Turner's colossal power. The *Jason* might have been painted by a man who would not, in the rest of his career, have gone beyond *Salvator*. But here we have the richest, wildest, and most difficult composition—exquisite appreciation of form and effect in sea and sky—and the first indication of colour, properly so called, in the fish.\* This makes the picture of immense importance in the history of Turner's progress; for the rest of it is still painted nearly on the old Wilsonian principles: that is to say, the darks are all exaggerated to bring out the lights; (the post for instance, in the foreground, is nearly coal black, relieved only with brown)—all the shadows are coal black,—and the greys of the sky sink almost into night effect. And observe, this is not with any intention of giving an impressive effect of violent storm. It is very squally and windy; but the fishing boats are going to sea, and the packet is coming in in her usual way, and the flat fish are a topic of principal interest on the pier. Nobody is frightened, and there is no danger. The sky is black only because Turner did not yet generally know how to bring out light otherwise than by contrast. But in those aforesaid flat fish, light is coming in another way: by colour and gradation. Note the careful loading and crumbling of the paint to the focus of light in the nearer one; and the pearly playing colour in the others.

It may be well to advise the reader that the "English packet" is the cutter in the centre, entering the harbour; else he might perhaps waste some time in trying to discover the *Princess Maude* or *Princess Alice* through the gloom on the left. The figures throughout will repay examination; none are without individuality and interest. It will be observed, perhaps, that the fisherman at the stern of the boat just pushing from the pier, seems unreasonably excited in bidding adieu to his wife, who looks down to him over the parapet; but if the spectator closely examines the dark bottle which he shakes at her, he will find she has given it him only half full of Cognac. She has kept the rest in her own flask.

\* The reader will find an important anecdote, touching upon these fish, in my pamphlet on *Pre-Raphaelitism*, p. 311. I owe it to Mr. Lupton; but have made a mistake respecting the time during which Turner had lost sight of his own picture before the circumstance took place. I should have written "several years" instead of "several months."

The sky is throughout very noble, as well as the indication of space of horizon beyond the bowsprit of the vessel outside the harbour. In a dark day the finer passages on this side of the picture are, however, quite invisible.

476. SHIPWRECK (1805).

I cannot find any record of the exhibition of this picture, and take its date, therefore, on the authority of the published catalogue. There appears, however, to be about as much as two years would give of difference in style between this and the *Calais Pier*; the principal changes being in the more delicate and mysterious grey, instead of the ponderous blackness; and the evidently more stern and pathetic temper of the maturing mind.

Although there is much to be regretted in the present position of this picture—as of all the rest—there is, in this one instance, an advantage in its nearness to a characteristic work of Turner's late period, so that we may learn much from a comparison of the two. Stand a little towards the centre of the room, where you can look alternately from the *Shipwreck* to the *Phryne* (521), and consider the general character of each subject. In the first, there is the utmost anxiety and distress, of which human life is capable: in the second, the utmost recklessness and rapture. In the first, a multitude's madness in despair: in the second, a multitude's madness in delight. In the first, the Nature is an infinity of cloud and condemnation: in the second, an infinity of light and beneficence. In the first, the work of man is in its lowest humiliation—the wreck disappearing from the sea like a passing shadow: in the second, the work of man is in its utmost pride; in endlessness of accumulation, and perfectness of persistence; temple beyond temple, pillar above pillar, tower crowning tower; a universe of triumphal Peace. Time, in the first, has death and life in its every moment: in the second, it exists only to be laughed away. Here, the ocean waves are playing with a ship of war: there, two dogs are playing with a crystal ball. And, in the one picture, the pleasant boughs wave, and the sun lightens, and the buildings open their glorious gates upon the track of guilt; and, in the other, the sea asks for, and the heavens allow, the doom of those in whom we know no evil.

Do not think that I am forcing the meaning of these two pictures. They were not indeed painted with any thought

of their comparison or opposition; but they indicate two opposite phases of the painter's mind, and his better and pitying grasp of this world's ways. The *Shipwreck* is one only of many, in which he strove to speak his sympathy with the mystery of human pain. The other is definitely painted as an expression of the triumph of Guilt. Do not think those two dogs playing with the crystal ball are meaningless. Dogs don't usually play with crystal balls. Turner intended you to notice them specially. They mean the lower or sensual part of human nature, playing with the World. Look how the nearest one, the graceful greyhound, leaps at it!—watch its wild toss and fairy fragility of colour: then look out on that illimitable space of courts and palaces, into which the troop of flying girls are rushing down! That is the world which Phryne plays with. Turner never painted such another distance for infinity or for completeness: observe, none of these palaces are in ruins; Turner liked ruins for his own part, but Phryne did not. She would have built Thebes again if they would have let her; she was not one to go the way of ruins. And if you still doubt his meaning, look to the Academy Catalogue of 1838, and you will find a sentence added to the account of the picture. “Phryne going to the bath as Venus. *Demosthenes taunted by Æschines* ;”—Note that;—the man who could have saved Greece taunted by the son of the harlot!

There is something very strange and sorrowful in the way Turner used to hint only at these under meanings of his; leaving us to find them out, helplessly; and if we did not find them out, no word more ever came from him. Down to the grave he went, silent. “You cannot read me.” “You do not care for me; let it all pass; go your ways.”

Touching the actual painting of the figures in this *Phryne*, we shall have more to say presently, our business, now, being with the *Shipwreck*; in which, however, note for future animadversion, that the crew of the nearer boat prove infinitely more power of figure-painting than ever landscape painter showed before. Look close into it: coarse it may be; but it comes very nearly up to Hogarth in power of expression. Look at that ghastly woman's face and those helpless arms; and the various torpor and terror, and desolate agony, crushed and drenched down among the rending planks and rattling oars. Think a little over your “landscapes with figures.” Hunt up your

solitary fishermen on river banks; your Canaletto and Guardi crowds in projecting dominoes and triangular hats; your Claudesque nymphs and warriors; your modern picturesque groups of striped petticoats and scarlet cloaks; and see whether you can find *one* piece of true human action and emotion drawn as that boat's crew is, before you allow yourself again to think that Turner could not paint figures. Whether he always *would* paint them or not is another question.

The sea painting, in both this and the *Calais Pier*, is, I think, much over-rated. It is wonderful in rendering action of wave; but neither the lustre of surface nor nature of the foam—still less of the spray—are marked satisfactorily. Through his whole life Turner's drawing of large waves left them deficient in lustre and liquidity: and this was the more singular, because in calm or merely rippled water, no one ever rendered lustre or clearness so carefully. But his sympathies (and he sympathised with everything) were given to the rage of the wave, not to its shining; and as he traced its toss and writhe, he neglected its glow. The want of true foam drawing is a worse fault; none of the white touches in these seas have, in the least, the construction or softness of foam; and there is no spray anywhere. In reality, in such a sea as this of the shipwreck, the figures even in the nearest boat would have been visible only in dim fragments through the mist of spray; and yeasty masses of spume would have been hanging about the breakers like folds of cloth, and fluttering and flashing on the wind like flights of birds. Turner was still close bound by the old theories of the sea; and, though he had looked at it long enough to know the run and the leap of it, dared not yet lay the foam on its lips. He did better afterwards. In the year 1842 he exhibited a picture in the Academy, thus described in the catalogue:—

“Snowstorm. Steamboat off a harbour mouth making signals, and going by the lead. The author \* was in this storm the night the *Ariel* left Harwich.”

This picture was described by some of the critics of the day as a mass of “soapsuds and whitewash.” Turner was passing the evening at my father's house on the day this criticism came out: and after dinner, sitting in his arm-

\* Note Turner's significant use of this word, instead of “artist.”

chair by the fire, I heard him murmuring low to himself at intervals, "Soapsuds and whitewash!" again, and again, and again. At last I went to him, asking "why he minded what they said?" Then he burst out;—"Soapsuds and whitewash! What would they have? I wonder what they think the sea's like? I wish they'd been in it."

The picture belongs to the nation, and, when exhibited, will be interesting, as marking how far the sense of foaming mystery, and blinding whiteness of surf and salt, then influenced his conception of the sea, rather than the old theories of black clouds relieving terminated edges of waves. The sea is, however, even so, not quite right: it is not yeasty *enough*: the linear wave-action is still too much dwelt upon, and confused with the true foam.

But there is a worse fault in this shipwreck than the want of spray. Nobody is *wet*. Every figure in that boat is as dry as if they all were travelling by waggon through the inland counties. There is no sense, in the first place, of their clothes clinging to their bodies; and, in the second place, no surface is reflective. When smooth things are wet, they shine; wood becomes as reflective as a mirror; and, therefore, when we see that the knee of the boy who lies down on the box to catch at some one over the boat's side, casts no reflection on the wood, the whole of the scene becomes purely mythical and visionary: and it is no longer a sea, but some coiling, white, dry material, in which the boat is imbedded. Throughout the work, the firm, black shadows, unbroken by any flashes of lustre, and the dead greys, unmingled with any reflective or glancing colour, are equally inconsistent with the possibility of anything's being wet.

Nothing can show more distinctly the probationary state of Turner's mind at the period; he had not yet been able to quit himself of the old types in any one way—had not even got so far as to understand that the sea was a damp element. I used once to think Homer's phrase, "wet water," somewhat tautological; but I see that he was right, and that it takes time to understand the fact.\*

\* "Writing lately to my friend Mr. Brierly, (with whose most faithful and brilliant drawings of our navy in the Baltic the public are already so familiar,) in order to make some inquiries respecting the ships in the *Calais Pier*, I alluded to this singular defect in both the sea pieces. The following extract from Mr. Brierly's note in reply is most valuable and suggestive:—

"Your remark about nobody being wet caused me to look again

With all these drawbacks (which I dwell upon in order more effectually to overthrow the idea of these being Turner's greatest works, and this his greatest style—a notion gravely interfering with our power of judging any of his work)—with all these drawbacks and shortcomings, the work is far in advance of anything that had been done before. The reader may perhaps have some pleasure in comparing Claude's idea of a shipwreck with Turner's. The woodcut on p. 337—a fac-simile of a shipwreck in the *Liber Veritatis* \*—will enable him to do so at his ease. As, however, we have been endeavouring to elucidate the meaning of Turner verbally, perhaps it is unfair to Claude to leave him wholly unexplained. The following references may assist the reader in making out the subject:—

s.—The ship.

m.m.—Masts of the ship, entirely denuded of rigging by the violence of the gale.

r.—The rock, on which the ship has struck so violently that she has broken one end entirely off, the rest of her remaining quite uninjured.

a.b.—The sea.

e.—An enraptured passenger, who has escaped from the ship.

c.—The captain, who has seen everything out of the ship, and is preparing to follow the enraptured passenger.

w.w.—The wind.

more particularly at the *Shipwreck*, when another idea also occurred to me. In anything of a breeze, and particularly half a gale of wind, as we have here, the lower parts of all sails of such boats as these get thoroughly wetted by the spray dashing into them, so that the upper canvas, being dry, is several shades lighter, and greyer or cooler, than the wet portion; always excepting when there has been heavy rain to wet the sails equally. This will strike you in any ordinary breezy weather, when you see boats knocking about at Spithead, and if the sun is shining through the sails, the transparent wet parts give a very beautiful effect."

Not only has Turner missed this effect in the *Calais Pier*—when the weather is just the thing for it (I think we might fairly suppose in the *Shipwreck* the sails to be wet all over)—but I remember no instance of Turner's seizing it in any subsequent picture—so much did the old conventionalism weigh upon him.

I owe to Mr. Brierly, however, not only the pointing out of this error, but of a principal beauty in the sea of the *Shipwreck*—the exact truth, namely, of the lines of the *wake* of the large boat running back to the left from her stern. Very few painters would have noticed these.

\* No. 72.

## 477. THE GODDESS OF DISCORD IN THE GARDENS OF THE HESPERIDES.\* (1806.)

In the year 1802, Turner seems to have visited Switzerland for the first time; up to that date, no Swiss subject appears in the catalogues as having been exhibited by him; but in 1803, besides the *Calais Pier*, we find "24. *Bonneville, Savoy, with Mont Blanc*. 110. *The Opening of the Festival of the Vintage at Macon*. 237. *Chateau de St. Michael, Bonneville, Savoy*. 384. *St. Hugo denouncing vengeance on the Shepherds of Cormayeur, in the Val d'Aosta*. And 396. *Glacier and Source of the Arveron*;" showing with what enthusiasm he entered on the new fields opened to him in the Alps.

This wonderful picture of the Hesperides is, however, the first *composition* in which Turner introduced the mountain knowledge he had gained in his Swiss journey: and it is a combination of these Swiss experiences, under the guidance of Nicholas Poussin, whose type of landscape has been followed throughout. Nearly all the faults of the picture are owing to Poussin; and all its virtues to the Alps. I say *nearly* all the faults of the picture, because it would not be fair to charge Poussin wholly with its sombre colour, inasmuch as many of his landscapes are beautifully golden and deep blue. Possibly the Goddess of Discord may have had something to do with the matter; and the shadow of her presence may have been cast on laurel bough and golden fruit; but I am not disposed to attribute such a piece of far-fetched fancy to Turner at this period; and I suppose it to be partly owing to the course of his quiet practice, partly to his knowledge of the more sombre pictures of Poussin rather than of the splendid ones, and partly to the continued influence of Wilson and Morland—that the garden of the Hesperides is so particularly dull a place. But it is a sorrowful fault in the conception that it should be so.

Indeed, unless we were expressly assured of the fact, I question whether we should have found out that these were gardens at all, as they have the appearance rather of wild mountain ground, broken and rocky; with a pool of gloomy water; some heavy groups of trees, of the species grown on Clapham Common; and some bushes bearing

\* Exhibited at the British Institution in 1806, under the title, *The Goddess of Discord choosing the Apple of Contention in the Gardens*, etc.

very unripe and pale pippins—approaching in no wise the beauty of a Devonshire or Normandy orchard, much less

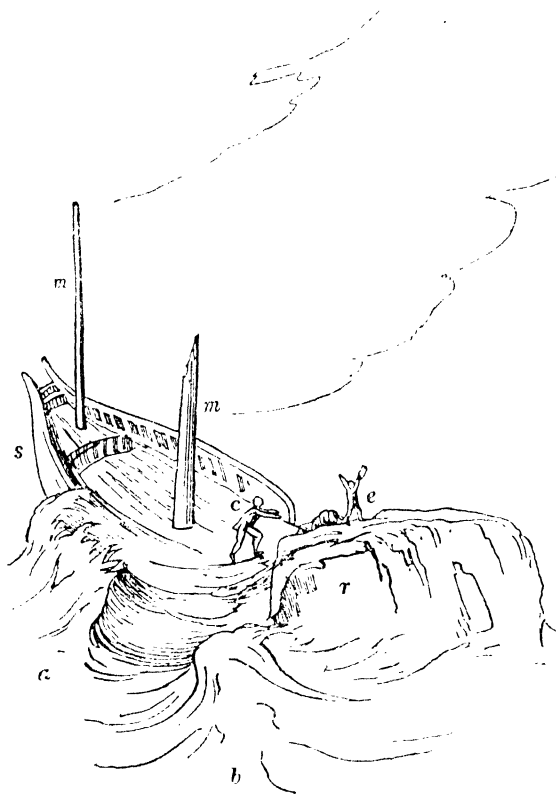


FIG. 36.

that of an orange grove, and, least of all, of such fruit as goddesses would be likely to quarrel for.

But there are much worse errors in the picture than these. We may grant the grey colour to Turner's system; we may accept the wild ground as the only kind of garden which would be probable under Atlas; though the places which Discord seeks, and dragons guard, are usually of a



nature at once brighter and baser. But we cannot accept the impossibilities of mountain form into which the wretched system of Poussin's idealism moulded Turner's memory of the Alps. It is not *possible* that hill masses on this scale, should be divided into these simple, steep, and stone-like forms. Great mountains, however bold, are always full of endless fracture and detail, and indicate on the brows and edges of their cliffs, both the multitudinous, and the deeply wearing continuance, of the force of time, and stream, and tempest. This evidence of subdivision and prolonged endurance is always more and more distinct as the scale increases; the simple curves which are true for a thousand feet are false at three thousand, and falser at ten thousand; and the forms here adopted by Turner are not mountain forms at all, but those of small fragments of limestone, with a few loose stones at the top of them, magnified by mist into mountains. All this was the result of Idealism. Nature's mountains were not grand, nor broad, nor bold, nor steep enough. Poussin only knew what they should be, and the Alps must be rough-hewn to his mind.

Farther, note the enormous torrent which roars down behind the dragon, above the main group of trees. In Nature, that torrent would have worn for itself a profound bed, full of roundings and wrinkled lateral gulphs. Here, it merely dashes among the squared stones as if it had just been turned on by a New River company. And it has not only had no effect on its bed, but appears quite unable to find its way to the bottom, for we see nothing more of it after it has got down behind the tree tops. In reality, the whole valley beneath would have been filled by a mass of rounded stones and debris by such a torrent as that.

But farther. When the streams are so lively in the distance, one might at least expect them not to be stagnant in the foreground, and if we may have no orderly gravel walks, nor gay beds of flowers in our garden, but only large stones and bushes, we might surely have had the pleasantness of a clear mountain stream. But Poussin never allowed mountain streams; nothing but dead water was proper in a classical foreground; so we have the brown pool with a water-lily or two, and a conventional fountain, falling, not into a rocky trough, or a grassy hollow, but into a large glass bowl or tureen. This anticipation of the beauties of the Soulages collection, given in charge to the dragon

together with his apples, "Glass, with care," is certainly not Poussin's fault, but a caprice of Turner's own.

In the published catalogue the reader will find it stated that the "*colour and texture of this picture are as rich and sound as the ideas are noble, and universally intelligible.*" The ideas *are* noble indeed; for the most part:—noble in spite of Poussin, and intelligible in spite of Marlborough House darkness; but the statement that the colour is rich only shows what curious ideas people in general have about colour. I do not call it a work in colour at all. It is a simple study in grey and brown, heightened with a red drapery, and cooled with a blue opening in the sky. But colour, properly so called, there is as yet none; nothing but the usual brown trees near, grey trees far off, brown stonework, and black shadow. And it is another notable proof of the terrible power of precedent on the strongest human mind, that just as Vanderveelde kept Turner for twenty years from seeing that the sea was wet, so Poussin kept Turner for twenty years from seeing that the Alps were rosy, and that grass was green. It would be a wonderful lesson for us all if we could for a moment set a true piece of Swiss foreground and mountain beside that brown shore and those barren crags. The moss arabesques of violet and silver; the delicate springing of the myrtle leaves along the clefts of shade, and blue bloom of their half seen fruit; the rosy flashes of rhododendron-flame from among the pine roots, and their crests of crimson, sharp against the deep Alpine air, from the ridges of grey rock; the gentian's peace of pale, ineffable azure; as if strange stars had been made for earth out of the blue light of heaven; the soft spaces of mountain grass, for ever young, over which the morning dew is dashed so deep that it looks, under the first long sun-rays, like a white veil falling folded upon the hills; wreathing itself soon away into silvery tresses of cloud, braided in and out among the pines, and leaving all the fair glades and hillocks warm with the pale green glow of grassy life, and whispering with lapse of everlasting springs. Infinite tenderness mingled with this infinite power, and the far away summits, alternate pearl and purple, ruling it from their stainless rest. A time came when the human heart, whose openings we are watching, could feel these things, but we must not talk too much of its achievements yet.

There is, however, one image in the landscape which, in its kind, is as noble as may be—the dragon that guards and darkens it; a goodly watch-tower he has; and a goodly pharos he will make of it at midnight, when the fire glares hottest from the eyes of the ghastly sentinel. There is something very wonderful, it seems to me, in this anticipation, by Turner, of the grandest reaches of recent inquiry into the form of the dragons of the old earth. I do not know at what period the first hints were given of the existence of their remains; but certainly no definite statements of their probable forms were given either by Buckland, Owen, or Conybeare before 1815; yet this saurian of Turner's is very nearly an exact counterpart of the model of the *Iguanodon*, now the guardian of the Hesperian Gardens of the Crystal Palace, wings only excepted, which are, here, almost accurately, those of a *pterodactyle*. The instinctive grasp which the healthy imagination takes of *possible* truth, even in its wildest flights, was never more marvelously demonstrated.\*

I am very anxious to get this picture hung lower, in order that the expression of the dragon's head may be well seen, and all the mighty articulations of his body, rolling in great iron waves, a cataract of coiling strength and crashing armour, down among the mountain rents. Fancy him moving, and the roaring of the ground under his rings; the grinding down of the rocks by his toothed whorls; the skeleton glacier of him in thunderous march, and the ashes of the hills rising round him like smoke, and encompassing him like a curtain!

I have already alluded to the love of the terrible grotesque which mingled in no small measure with the love of the beautiful in Turner's mind, as it did in Tintoret's. The reader will find farther inquiries into this subject in the eighth chapter of the third volume of *Modern Painters*, and I need only notice here the peculiar *naturalness* which there is in Turner's grotesque, and the thirst for largeness which characterises his conception of animals as well as landscapes. No serpent or dragon was ever conceived before, either so vast, or so *probable*, as these of the Jason and Hesperides. Another picture, also in the possession of the nation, *Rizpah, the Daughter of Aiah*, will show the same grasp of terror exerted in another direction, and con-

\* Compare *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. Chap. VIII. §§ 12, etc.

necting the English landscape painter, bred as he was in the cold and severe classical school, with the German interpreters of fantastic or pathetic superstition.

483. GREENWICH HOSPITAL (1809).

I never know whether most to venerate or lament the strange impartiality of Turner's mind, and the vast cadence of subjects in which he was able to take interest. Who could have supposed, that a man capable of climbing those crags of Atlas, would be found next year sauntering in Greenwich Park: that from the fiery dragon he would have turned to peaceful fawns and hinds—from the rolling of the Atlantean storm-cloud, to the smoke of London chimneys—from the apples of the Hesperides, to the Cider Cellar. So it is, however. He does not show one whit less care, patience, or exertion of power in painting this reach of the river round the Isle of Dogs, than that cataract down the cliff of dragons: nay, in some respects, the Deptford distance is more elaborate, and certainly the more skilful, for Turner at this time understood it better. But what a sorrowful matter it is, that the man who could paint thus was allowed to divide his strength between vulgarity of fact and gracefulness of fiction; that he was permitted so long to think that in order to be fine, it was necessary to be false; and that no one had sense or feeling enough to say to him, "Paint me the Rhone as truly as you have painted the Thames—and the Simplon as you have painted Richmond Hill—and Rouen Cathedral as you have painted Greenwich Hospital" ! He found his way at last to these things: but not till many and many a year had been wasted on Greenwich and Bligh Sands.

It is of no use to write any notes on this picture where it is hung at present. I value Turners as much as most people, and am far-sighted; but I literally would not give five pounds for that picture of Greenwich, if to its possession were annexed the condition that it was to be hung six feet above the eye—much less if it were condemned to such a position as it is in at present.

485. ABINGDON, BERKSHIRE (1810?).

A very beautiful example of the painter's most skilful work in his first period: the main lesson to be derived from it being the dignity of the simplest objects, when truly painted, under partial concealment by aerial effects. They must be truly painted, observe, first; the forms given must

be studied with exquisite care, but veiled as far as is needful to give them largeness and mystery.

To so singular an extent will the forms of things come out gradually *through* the mist, as you look long at Turner's effects of this kind, that many of his admirers have thought that he painted the whole scene first with all its details, and then threw the mist over it. But it is not so; and it cannot be done so: all efforts to copy Turner on such a plan will end in total discomfiture. The misty effect is indeed partly given by breaking one colour over another; but the forms of objects are not thus rendered indistinct; if they were, the picture would look as if it had been rubbed over with blue paint accidentally, after it was finished, and every spectator would wish to clear off the upper colour and see what was underneath. The misty appearance is given by resolutely confusing, altering, or denying the form at the moment of painting it; and the virtue of the work is in the painter's having perfectly clear and sharp conception of all that he chooses to confuse, alter, or deny: so that his very confusion becomes suggestive—his alteration decorative—and his denial affirmative: and it is because there is an idea with and in—not *under*—every touch, that we find the objects rising into existence as we gaze.

487. CATTLE IN WATER (1811?).

I imagine this to be one of the very few instances in which Turner made a *study* in oil. The subject was completed afterwards in a careful, though somewhat coarse, drawing, which defines the Norman window in the ruined wall, and is one of many expressions of Turner's feeling of the contrast between the pure rustic life of our own day, and the pride and terror of the past. This idea was more developed in the *Liber Studiorum* subject of the crypt of Kirkstall Abbey, with the cows lying down under the pillars by the stagnant pool: again, in the *Norham Castle* of the *Liber Studiorum*, (nearly duplicated in the *Norham* of the *River Scenery*): and again in the *Winchelsea Gate* of the *Liber Studiorum*. In France, churches are constantly turned into corn-markets: we in England are content with turning castles into cow-houses.

489. COTTAGE DESTROYED BY AN AVALANCHE (1812?).

If the reader will look back for a moment to the *Abingdon*, with its respectable country house, safe and slow carrier's waggon, decent church spire, and nearly motionless

river, and then return to this avalanche, he will see the range of Turner's sympathy, from the quietest to the wildest of subjects. We saw how he sympathised with the anger and energy of waves: here we have him in sympathy with anger and energy of stones. No one ever before had conceived a stone in *flight*, and this, as far as I am aware, is the first effort of painting to give inhabitants of the lowlands any idea of the terrific forces to which Alpine scenery owes a great part of its character, and most of its forms. Such things happen oftener and in quieter places than travellers suppose. The last time I walked up the Gorge de Gotteron, near Fribourg, I found a cottage which I had left safe two years before, reduced to just such a heap of splinters as this, by some two or three tons of sandstone which had fallen on it from the cliff. There is nothing exaggerated in the picture; its only fault, indeed, is that the avalanche is not vaporous enough. In reality, the smoke of snow rises before an avalanche of any size, towards the lower part of its fall, like the smoke from a broadside of a ship of the line.

496. BLIGH SANDS (1815).

The notice of it in the published Catalogue is true and good. It is a fine picture of its class; and has more glow in its light, and more true gloom in its dark, than the great sea-pieces we have already seen. But the subject is, to me, wholly devoid of interest: the fishing-boats are too far off to show their picturesque details; the sea is too low to be sublime, and too dark to be beautiful; and the shore is as dull as sand can be. And yet, were I to choose between this picture and the next, I would infinitely rather have the bit of sand and sea-gulls than the *Carthaginian Empire*.

499. THE DECLINE OF THE CARTHAGINIAN EMPIRE (1817).

This picture was painted as the sequel to that in Trafalgar Square, which is far the finer of the two, and was exhibited in the same year (1815) as the *Bligh Sands*, and the celebrated *Crossing the Brook*. This 1817 picture I think one of the deepest humiliations which Turner's art ever sustained. It is, in fact, a work in the sickness of change; giving warning of revolution of style and feeling, without, as yet, any decisive possession of the new principles; while the guide-book is entirely true in its description of its design,—“Claude was undoubtedly the model, aided by architectural drawings.” It is, in fact, little more than an

accumulation of Academy students' outlines, coloured brown. If we were to examine the figures and furniture of the foreground, piece by piece, we should indeed find much that was interesting, and much that no one but Turner could have done, but all wrought evidently for show, and with painful striving to set forth something that was not in his heart, and that never could get there. The passage in the note at p. 347, from the first volume of *Modern Painters*, will show the reader what place I have given, from the first, to this and other pictures of its kind: but, of all that I know, this is the worst; its raw brown colour giving the city the appearance of having been built of stamped leather instead of stone. It is as if the brown demon, who was just going to be exorcised for ever, were putting out all his strength for the total destruction of a great picture by way of final triumph. The preparation for transition is seen in the noble colouring of the sky, which is already Turnerian of the second period; beautiful, natural, and founded on no previous work of art.

The text which Turner gave with this picture in the Academy Catalogue of the period was as follows:—

*The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire.* Rome, being determined on the overthrow of her hated rival, demanded of her such terms as might either force her into war, or ruin her by compliance. The enervated Carthaginians, in their anxiety for peace, consented to give up even their arms and their children.

“At Hope's delusive smile,  
The chieftain's safety and the mother's pride  
Were to the insidious conqueror's grasp resigned;  
While o'er the western wave the ensanguined sun,  
In gathering huge, a stormy signal spread,  
And set portentous.”

This piece of verse, Turner's own, though, it must be confessed, not poetically brilliant, is at least interesting in its proof that he meant the sky—which, as we have seen, is the most interesting part of the picture—for a stormy one.

This is the third quotation from the *Fallacies of Hope* which occurs in the Academy catalogues. The course of his mind may be traced through the previous poetical readings very clearly. His first was given in 1798 (with a view of Coniston Fell) from *Paradise Lost*, and there is a strange ominousness—as there is about much that great men do—

in the choice of it. Consider how these four lines, the first he ever chose, express Turner's peculiar mission as distinguished from other landscapists:—

“Ye mists and exhalations, that now rise  
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,  
Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,  
In honour to the world's great Author rise.”

In this and the next year, with views of Dunstanborough, Norham, and Fountain's Abbey, etc., came various quotations, descriptive of atmospheric effects, from Thomson, interspersed with two or three from Milton, and one from Mallet.

In 1800, some not very promising “anon” lines were attached to views of Dolbadern and Caernarvon Castles. Akenside and Ossian were next laid under contribution. Then Ovid, Callimachus, and Homer. At last, in 1812, the *Fallacies of Hope* begin, *apropos* of Hannibal's crossing the Alps: and this poem continues to be the principal text-book, with occasional recurrences to Thomson, one passage from Scott, and several from Byron. We shall come upon most of these as we pursue our round of the pictures: at least when all which are now national property are exhibited. The *Childe Harold*, which is the only picture at present in a good light, is an important proof of his respect for the genius of Byron.

### III. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SECOND PERIOD, OR THAT OF MASTERSHIP

The reader may perhaps suppose that I limit Turner's course of conception too arbitrarily in assigning a single year as the period of its change. But the fact is that, though the human mind is prepared for its great transitions by many previous circumstances, and much gradual accumulation of knowledge, those transitions may, and frequently do, take place in a moment. One glance of the eye, one springing aside of a fancy, may cast a spark on the prepared pile; and the whole theory and practice of past life may be burnt up like stubble; and new foundations be laid, in the next hour, for the perpetual future toil of existence. This cannot, however, take place, with the utmost



sharpness of catastrophe, in so difficult an art as that of painting: old habits will remain in the hand, and the knowledge necessary to carry out the new principles needs to be gradually gathered; still, the new conviction, whatever it be, will probably be expressed, within no very distant period from its acquirement, in some single picture, which will at once enable us to mark the old theories as rejected, at all events, then, if not before. This condemning and confirming picture is, in the present instance, I believe, the *Bay of Baïæ*.

For, in the year 1819, Turner exhibited the *Orange Merchant*, and *Richmond Hill*, both in his first manner. In 1820, *Rome from the Vatican*: a picture which I have not seen. In 1821, *nothing*: a notable pause. In 1822, *What you will*: a picture I have not seen either, and which I am very curious about, as it may dispute the claims of first assertion with its successor. In 1823 came the *Bay of Baïæ*.

Why I put the real time of change so far back as 1820 will appear, after I have briefly stated the characters in which the change consists.

Pictures belonging to the second period are technically distinguished from those of the first in three particulars:—

1. Colour takes the place of grey.
2. Refinement takes the place of force.
3. Quantity takes the place of mass.

First, Colour appears everywhere instead of grey. That is to say, Turner had discovered that the shaded sides of objects, as well as their illumined ones, are in reality of different, and often brilliant colours. His shadow is, therefore, no longer of one hue, but perpetually varied; whilst the lights, instead of being subdued to any conventional level, are always painted as near the brightness of natural colour as he can.

Secondly, Refinement takes the place of force. He had discovered that it is much more difficult to draw tenderly than ponderously, and that all the most beautiful things in Nature depended on infinitely delicate lines. His effort is, therefore, always, now, to trace lines as finely, and shades as softly, as the point of the brush and feeling of hand are capable of doing; and the effects sought are themselves the most subtle and delicate which Nature presents, rarely those which are violent. The change is the same as

from the heavy touch and noisy preferences of a beginner in music, to the subdued and tender fingering or breathing of a great musician—rising, however, always into far more masterful stress when the occasion comes.

Thirdly, Quantity takes the place of mass. Turner had also ascertained, in the course of his studies, that Nature was infinitely full, and that old painters had not only missed her pitch of hue, but her power of accumulation. He saw there were more clouds in any sky than ever had been painted; more trees in every forest, more crags on every hill side; and he set himself with all his strength to proclaim this great fact of Quantity in the universe.

Now so long as he introduced all these three changes in an instinctive and unpretending way, his work was noble; but the moment he tried to idealise, and introduced his principles for the sake of display, they led him into depths of error proportioned exactly to the extent of effort. His painting, at this period, of an English town, or a Welsh hill, was magnificent and faultless, but all his idealism, mythology, romance, and composition in general, were more or less wrong. He erred through all, and by reason of all—his great discoveries. He erred in *colour*: because not content with discerning the brilliancy of Nature, he tried to enhance that brilliancy by every species of coloured accessory, until colour was killed by colour, and the blue skies and snowy mountains, which would have been lovely by themselves, were confused and vulgarised by the blue dresses and white complexions of the foreground figures. He erred in *refinement*, because, not content with the natural tenderness of tender things, he strove to idealise even strong things into gentleness, until his architecture became transparent, and his ground ghostly; and he erred finally, and chiefly, in *quantity*, because, in his enthusiastic perception of the fulness of Nature, he did not allow for the narrowness of the human heart; he saw, indeed, that there were no limits to creation, but forgot that there were many to reception; he thus spoiled his most careful works by the very richness of invention they contained, and concentrated the materials of twenty noble pictures into a single failure.\*

\* The reader who has heard my writings respecting Turner characterised as those of a mere partisan, may be surprised at these expressions of blame, and perhaps suppose them an indication of some change of feeling. The following extract from the first volume of *Modern Painters*

The oil pictures exhibited in the Academy as being always more or less done for show, and to produce imposing effect, display these weaknesses in the greatest degree; the drawings in which he tried to do his best are next in failure, but the drawings in which he simply liked his subject, and painted it for its own simple sake, are wholly faultless and magnificent.

All the works of this period are, however, essentially Turnerian; original in conception, and unprecedented in treatment; they are, therefore, when fine, of far greater value than those of the first period; but as being more daring, they involve greater probabilities of error or failure.

One more point needs notice in them. They generally are painted with far more enjoyment. Master now of himself and his subjects, at rest as to the choice of the thing to be done, and triumphing in perpetually new perceptions of the beauty of the Nature he had learned to interpret, his work seems poured out in perpetual rejoicing; his sympathy with the pomp, splendour, and gladness of the world increases, while he forgets its humiliation and its pain; they cannot now stay the career of his power, nor check the brightness of his exultation. From the dens of the serpent and the dragon he ascends into soft gardens and balmy glades; and from the roll of the waggon on the dusty road, or labour of the boat along the stormy shore,

will show that I always held, and always expressed, precisely the same opinions respecting these Academy compositions:—

“The *Caligula's Bridge*, *Temple of Jupiter*, *Departure of Regulus*, *Ancient Italy*, *Cicero's Villa*, and such others, come they from whose hand they may, I class under the general head of ‘nonsense pictures.’ There never can be any wholesome feeling developed in these preposterous accumulations, and where the artist's feeling fails, his art follows; so that the worst possible examples of Turner's colour are found in pictures of this class. Neither in his actual views of Italy has Turner ever caught her true spirit, except in the little vignettes to Rogers' poems. The *Villa of Galileo*, the nameless composition with stone pines, the several villa moonlights, and the convent compositions in the voyage of Columbus, are altogether exquisite; but this is owing chiefly to their simplicity, and perhaps, in some measure, to their smallness of size. None of his large pictures at all equal them; the *Bay of Baie* is encumbered with material, it contains ten times as much as is necessary to a good picture, and yet is so crude in colour as to look unfinished. The *Palestrina* is full of raw white, and has a look of Hampton Court about its long avenue; the *Modern Italy* is purely English in its near foliage; it is composed from Tivoli material, enriched and arranged most dexterously, but it has not the virtue of the real thing.”—(*Modern Painters*, Vol. I. p. 122.)

he turns aside to watch the dance of the nymph, and listen to the ringing of the cymbal.

#### IV. PICTURES OF THE SECOND PERIOD

##### 505. THE BAY OF BAIÆ (1823).

The Turnerian quotation with this picture,

“Waft me to sunny Baiæ’s shore,”

marks the spirit of exultation of the second period very interestingly, and the immediate result of it, as bearing on this subject, seems to be a discordance in the temper of contemplation. We have an accumulation of ruins, regarded with the utmost cheerfulness and satisfaction. The gods sit among the ruins, but do not attempt to mend any, having apparently come there as tourist gods. Though there are boats and figures on the shore, and a shepherd on the left, the greater part of the landscape is very desolate in its richness—full of apples and oranges, with nobody to eat them; of pleasant waters, with nobody to drink; of pleasant shades, with nobody to be cool; only a snake and a rabbit for inheritors of all that dominion of hill and forest:—we perceive, however, with consternation, by the two streams which have been diverted from the river to fall through the arches of the building near the bridge, that Nobody must have succeeded in establishing a mill among the ruins. Concerning which, it must be remembered that, though Turner had now broken through accepted rules of art, he had not broken through the accepted laws of idealism; and mills were, at this time, necessary and orthodox in poetical landscape, being supposed to give its elements otherwise ethereal and ambrosial, an agreeable earthy flavour, like truffles in pies.

If, however, we examine who these two figures in the foreground are, we shall presently accept this beautiful desolation of landscape with better understanding. The published catalogue misses out just the important words in Turner’s description of his picture, *The Bay of Baiæ, with the Story of Apollo and the Sybil*. The general reader may be glad to be reminded that the Cumæan Sybil, Deiphobe, being in her youth beloved by Apollo, and the god having promised to grant her whatever she would ask,

she, taking up a handful of earth, asked that she might live for as many years as there were grains of dust in her hand. She obtained her petition, and Apollo would have given her also perpetual youth, in return for her love; but she denied him, and wasted into the long ages; known at last only by her voice. We are rightly led to think of her here, as the type of the ruined beauty of Italy; foreshowing, so long ago, her low murmurings of melancholy prophecy, with all the unchanged voices of her sweet waves and mountain echoes. The fable seems to have made a strong impression on Turner's mind, the picture of the *Golden Bough* being a sequel to this; showing the Lake of Avernus, and Deiphobe, now bearing the golden bough—the guide of Æneas to the shades. In both these pictures there is a snake in the foreground among the fairest leafage, a type of the terror, or temptation, which is associated with the lovely landscapes; and it is curious that Turner seems to have exerted all his strength to give the most alluring loveliness to the soft descents of the Avernus Lake.

There is a curious sign of the remaining influences of the theories of idealism on Turner in the treatment of the stone pines in the *Bay of Baiæ*. It was the rule at this period that trees and all other important features of landscape were to be idealised, and idealisation consisted in the assemblage of various natural beauties into a whole, which was to be more beautiful than Nature; accordingly, Turner takes a stone pine to begin with, and keeps its general look of close shade and heaviness of mass; but as boughs of stone pine are apt to be cramped and rugged, and crampedness and ruggedness are un-ideal, he rejects the pine nature in the branches, and gives them the extremities of a witch elm! We shall see presently his farther progress in pine painting.

The main fault of the composition is, however, in the over indulgence of his new triumph in quantity. I suppose most observers, when first they come before this picture, are struck mainly by the beautiful blue distant sea and dark trees, which latter they probably dislike; the rest of the work appears to them a mere confusion of detail, rich, indeed, but hardly worth disentangling. The following procedure will, I think, under these circumstances be found serviceable. Take a stiff piece of pasteboard, about eight inches square, and cut out in the centre of it an oblong

opening, two and a half inches by three. Bring this with you to the picture, and standing three or four feet from it, according to your power of sight, look through the opening in the card at the middle distance, holding the card a foot or two from the eye, so as to turn the picture, piece by piece, into a series of small subjects. Examine these subjects quietly, one by one; sometimes holding the opening horizontal, sometimes upright, according to the bit you are examining, and you will find, I believe, in a very little while, that each of these small subjects becomes more interesting to you, and seems to have more in it, than the whole picture did before.

It is of course both a merit and a marvel, that these separate pieces should be so beautiful, but it is a great fault that they should be so put together as to destroy their interest: not that they are ill composed, but there is simply a surfeit of material. No composition whatever could render such a quantity digestible; nay, the very goodness of the composition is harmful, for everything so leads into everything else, that without the help of the limiting cardboard it is impossible to stop—we are dragged through arch after arch, and round tower after tower, never getting leave to breathe until we are jaded;\* whereas, in an ill-composed picture, such as one of Breughel's, we feel in a moment that it is an accumulation of pretty fragments; and, accepting it on these terms, may take one bird or tree at a time, and go over as much of the picture as we like, keeping the rest till to-morrow.

The colour of this picture, take it all in all, is unsatisfactory; the brown demon is not quite exorcised; and although, if the foliage of the foreground be closely examined, it will be found full of various hues, the greens are still too subdued. Partly, the deadness of effect is owing to change in the colour; many of the upper glazings, as in the dress of the Apollo, and in the tops of the pine-trees, have cracked and chilled; what was once golden has become brown; many violet and rose tints have vanished from the distant hills, and the blue of the sea has become pale.† But as far as regards refinement in

\* On the incapacity of the imagination to receive more than a certain quantity of excitement, see farther, *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. Chap. X. § 14.

† I do not at present express any opinion as to the degree in which these changes have been advanced or arrested by the processes to which

drawing, this picture nobly represents the work of the middle period. Examine, for example, carefully, the drawing of the brown tendrils and lighter leaves which encompass the stem of the tree on the left, then the bough drawing, spray by spray, in the trees themselves, then the little bit of bay underneath the Castle of Baiæ, just close to the stems; go back afterwards to the *View on Clapham Common*, and you will feel the change sufficiently.

It is because instances of this refinement, together with the excessive delight in quantity, are already seen in the *Richmond Hill*, exhibited in 1819 (in possession of the nation), that I think the origin of Turner's second manner cannot be put later than 1820.

507. SCENE FROM BOCCACCIO (1828).

Turner's title in the Academy Catalogue is *Boccaccio relating the Tale of the Bird-cage*.

Of the peculiar, and almost the only serious weakness of Turner's mind, brought out as it was in his second period, with respect to *figures*, this, and the *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego* (517), are very lamentable instances. I shall allude again to both these pictures in analysing his figure-treatment in the *Phryne*; but except as subjects for curious study, they are of no value whatsoever.

508. ULYSSES DERIDING POLYPHEMUS (1829).

I have just given my reason for dating the commencement of Turner's second manner as far back as 1820. But as in his first period it takes about ten years before he shows his full power in that manner, as in the *Abingdon* and *Bligh Sands*; so in this second phase, it takes nearly ten years before he feels entirely at ease, and brings all his resources into play. The Yorkshire, and River Scenery drawings, 1819 to 1826, are still very quiet in colour; the commencement of the England series, 1827, marked fuller development of the second manner; yet all the drawings of 1827 and 1828, (*Launceston, Buckfastleigh, Valle-Crucis, Okehampton*, etc.) are restrained to grey and brown companionship with the Yorkshire group; but in 1829, this *Polyphemus* asserts his perfect power, and is, therefore, to be considered as the *central picture* in Turner's career. And it is in some sort a type of his own destiny.

the pictures have recently been subjected, since the light in which they are placed does not permit a sufficient examination of them to warrant any such expression.

He had been himself shut up by one-eyed people, in a cave "darkened with laurels" (getting no good, but only evil, from all the fame of the great of long ago)—he had seen his companions eaten in the cave by the one-eyed people—(many a painter of good promise had fallen by Turner's side in those early toils of his); at last, when his own time had like to have come, he thrust the rugged pine-trunk—all a-blaze—(rough Nature, and the light of it)—into the faces of the one-eyed people, left them tearing their hair in the cloud-banks—got out of the cave in a humble way, under a sheep's belly—(helped by the lowliness and gentleness of Nature, as well as by her ruggedness and flame)—and got away to open sea as the dawn broke over the Enchanted Islands.

The printed catalogue describes this picture as "gorgeous with *sunset* colours." The first impression on most spectators would, indeed, be that it was evening, but chiefly because we are few of us in the habit of seeing summer sunrise. The time is necessarily morning—the Cyclops had been blinded as soon as he slept; Ulysses and his companions escaped when he drove out the flock in the early morning, and they put instantly to sea. The somewhat gloomy and deeply coloured tones of the lower crimson clouds, and of the stormy blue bars underneath them, are always given by Turner to skies which rise over any scene of death, or one connected with any deathful memories.\* But the morning light is unmistakably indicated by the pure whiteness of the mists, and upper mountain snows, above the Polyphemus; at evening they would have been in an orange glow. The white column of smoke which rises from the mountain slope is a curious instance of Turner's careful reading of his text. (I presume him to have read Pope only.)

"The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near,  
The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,  
And from their mountains rising smokes appear."

Homer says simply:—"We were so near the Cyclops' land, that we could see smoke, and hear the voices, and the bleating of the sheep and goats." Turner was, however, so excessively fond of opposing a massive form with a light wreath of smoke (perhaps almost the only proceeding which

\* For instances, see *Modern Painters*, Vol. IV. Chap. XVIII. § 24.  
56—L



could be said with him to have become a matter of recipe\*), that I do not doubt we should have had some smoke at any rate, only it is made more prominent in consequence of Pope's lines. The Cyclops' cave is low down at the shore—where the red fire is—and, considering that Turner was at this time Professor of Perspective to the Royal Academy, and that much outcry has lately been raised against supposed Pre-Raphaelite violations of perspective law, I think we may not unwarrantably inquire how our Professor supposed that *that* Cyclops could ever have got into *that* cave.

For the naval and mythological portion of the picture, I have not much to say: its real power is in its pure nature, and not in its fancy. If Greek ships ever resembled this one, Homer must have been a calumnious and foul-mouthed person in calling them continually "black ships"; and the entire conception, so far as its idealism and water-carriage are concerned, is merely a composition of the Lord Mayor's procession with a piece of ballet-scenery. The Cyclops is fine, passionate enough, and not disgusting in his hugeness; but I wish he were out of the way, as well as the sails and flags, that we might see the mountains better. The island rock is tunnelled at the bottom—on classical principles. The sea grows calm all at once, that it may reflect the sun; and one's first impression is that Leucothea is taking Ulysses right on the Goodwin Sands. But,—granting the local calmness,—the burnished glow upon the sea, and the breezy stir in the blue darkness about the base of the cliffs, and the noble space of receding sky, vaulted with its bars of cloudy gold, and the upper peaks of the snowy Sicilian promontory, are all as perfect and as great as human work can be. This sky is beyond comparison the finest that exists in Turner's oil paintings. Next to it comes that of the *Slaver*; and third, that of the *Temeraire*.

#### 511. VIEW OF ORVIETO (1830).

Once a very lovely picture, and still perfect in many parts: the tree, perhaps, the best bit of foliage painting in the rooms. But it is of no use to enter into circumstantial criticism, or say anything about its details, while it hangs in its present place. For all serious purposes, it might just as well be hung at the top of Saint Paul's.

\* See, for very marked example, vignette of *Gate of Theseus*, in illustrations to Byron.

## 513. CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE (1832).

Turner's quotation was the one given in the Catalogue, which, also, truly describes the general motives of the picture. It *was*, once, quite the loveliest work of the second period, but it is now a mere wreck. The fates by which Turner's later pictures perish are as various as they are cruel: the best work of the middle time, *Cologne*, free from all taint of idealism, and as safe and perfect as the day it was painted, was torn to rags on a railway two years ago; the greater number, whatever care be taken of them, fade into strange consumption and pallid shadowing of their former selves. Their effects were either attained by so light glazing of one colour over another, that the upper colour, in a year or two, sank entirely into its ground, and was seen no more; or else, by the stirring and kneading together of colours chemically discordant, which gathered into angry spots; or else, by laying on liquid tints with too much vehicle in them, which cracked as they dried; or solid tints, with too little vehicle in them, which dried into powder and fell off; or painting the whole on an ill-prepared canvas, from which the picture peeled like the bark from a birch-tree; or using a wrong white, which turned black; or a wrong red which turned grey; or a wrong yellow, which turned brown. But, one way or another, all but eight or ten of his later pictures have gone to pieces, or worse than pieces—ghosts, which are supposed to be representations of their living presence. This *Childe Harold* is a ghost only. What amount of change has passed upon it may be seen by examining the bridge over the river on the right. There either was, or was intended to be, a drawbridge or wooden bridge over the gaps between the two ruined piers. But either the intention of bridge was painted over, and has penetrated again through the disappearing upper colour; or (which I rather think) the realisation of bridge was once there, and is disappearing itself. Either way, the change is fatal; and there is hardly a single passage of colour throughout the cool tones of the picture which has not lost nearly as much. It would be less baneful if all the colours faded together amicably; but they are in a state of perpetual revolution; one staying as it was, and the others blackening or fading about it, and falling out with it, in irregular degrees, never more by any reparation to be reconciled. Nevertheless, even in its present state, all the

landscape on this right hand portion of the picture is exquisitely beautiful—founded on faithful reminiscences of the defiles of Narni, and the roots of the Apennines, seen under purple evening light. The tenderness of the mere painting, by which this light is expressed, is not only far beyond his former work, but it is so great that the eye can hardly follow the gradations of hue; it can feel, but cannot trace them. On what mere particles of colour the effect depends may be well seen in the central tower of the distant city, on the hill beyond the bridge. The side of it turned away from the light receives a rosy reflection from the other buildings in the town; and this reflection will be found, on looking close, to be expressed with three touches of vermilion, laid on the blue distant ground, the touches being as fine as the filament of a feather. Their effect depends on their own personal purity, and on the blue ground showing between them; they must be put on precisely in the right place and quantity at once, and be left; they cannot be stirred or disturbed afterwards, or all would be lost. The common ideas about oil painting—that it is a daubing and ponderous process—that it admits of alteration to any extent—that a touch is to be gradually finished up, or softened down, into shape, and so on—are at once, and most wholesomely, set at nought by such work as this. It is very interesting to walk back from this *Childe Harold* to the *View on Clapham Common*, and observe the intensity of the change of subject and method: the thick, plastered, rolling white paint of the one, and the silvery films of the other; the heavy and hot yellow of the one, and the pale rosy rays of the other, touched with pencillings so light, that, if the ground had been a butterfly's wing, they would not have stirred a grain of its azure dust.

The respective skill of each piece of painting may be practically tested by any artist who likes to try to copy both. The early work will be found quite within reach; but the late work wholly unapproachable. He would be a rash painter, whatever his name, whatever his supposed rank, who should accept a challenge to copy as much as three inches square of any part of that *Childe Harold* distance.

But the change in choice of subject is more remarkable still. Age usually makes men prosaic and cold; and we look back to the days of youth as alone those of the burning vision and the brightening hope: we may perhaps gain

in kindness and unselfishness, but we lose our impressibility. The old man may praise and help the youth's enthusiasm—may even be wise enough to envy it—but can seldom share it: the sympathy which he grants to the passion or the imagination of younger hearts, is granted with a smile, and he turns away presently to his brave prose of daily toil, and brave dealing with daily fact. But in Turner, the course of advancing mind was the exact reverse of this: we find him, as a boy at work, with heavy hand and undiverted eye, on the dusty Clapham Common road: but, as a man in middle life, wandering in dreams in the Italian twilight. As a boy, we find him alternately satirical and compassionate: all-observant of human action, sorrow, and weakness: curious of fishermen and fisherwives' quarrels—watchful of Jason's footstep over the dry bones to the serpent's den. But as the man in middle life, he mocks no more—he fears, he weeps no more: his foregrounds now are covered with flowers; the dust and the dry dead bones are all passed by: the sky is calm and clear—the rack of the clouds, and rending of the salt winds are forgotten. His whole soul is set to watch the wreaths of mist among the foldings of the hills; and listen to the lapse of the river waves in their fairest gliding. And thus the richest and sweetest passages of Byron, which usually address themselves most to the imagination of youth, became an inspiration to Turner in his later years: and an inspiration so compelling, that, while he only illustrated here and there a detached passage from other poets, he endeavoured, as far as in him lay, to delineate the whole mind of Byron. He fastened on incidents related in other poems; this is the only picture he ever painted to illustrate the poet's own mind and pilgrimage.

And the illustration is imperfect, just because it misses the *manliest* characters of Byron's mind: Turner was fitter to paint *Childe Harold* when he himself could both mock and weep, than now, when he can only dream: and, beautiful as the dream may be, he but joins in the injustice too many have done to Byron, in dwelling rather on the passionate than the reflective and analytic elements of his intellect. I believe no great power is sent on earth to be wasted, but that it must, in some sort, do an appointed work: and Byron would not have done this work, if he had only given melody to the passions, and majesty to the pangs,

of men. His clear insight into their foibles; his deep sympathy with justice, kindness and courage; his intense reach of pity, never failing, however far he had to stoop to lay his hand on a human heart, have all been lost sight of, either in too fond admiration of his slighter gifts, or in narrow judgment of the errors which burst into all the more flagrant manifestation, just because they were inconsistent with half his soul, and could never become incarnate, accepted, silent sin, but had still to fight for their hold on him. Turner was strongly influenced, from this time forward, by Byron's love of Nature; but it is curious how unaware he seems of the sterner war of his will and intellect; and how little this quiet and fair landscape, with its delicate ruin and softened light, does in reality express the tones of thought into which Harold falls oftenest, in that watchful and weary pilgrimage.

The failure, both as a picture and as a type, is chiefly on the left hand, where the scene is confused, impossible, and unaffecting. I believe most spectators will enjoy the other portions of the composition best by treating it as I have asked them to do the *Bay of Baiæ*; using, however, a somewhat larger opening for sight, so as to include at need the two reaches of the river.

There are some noticeable matters, here also, in the drawing of the stone pine. We saw that those in the *Bay of Baiæ* had no resemblance to the real tree, except, as I said, in shade and heavy-headedness. But this pine has something of the natural growth of the tree, both in its flatter top and stiffer character of bough: and thus, though the leaves are not yet right pine leaves, naturalism is gradually prevailing over idealism. One step farther, and in the third period we find the pine in the *Phryne* (No. 521) wholly unconventionalised, and perfect in expression of jagged leaf. The wild fantasticism in the twisting of the bough is, however, studied from the Scotch fir, not the stone pine; for Turner had not had, for a long time, any opportunity of studying pines, and was obliged to take the nearest thing he could get from Nature; when his conventional round mass with witch-elm sprays, was for ever forbidden to him. But through all these phases of increasing specific accuracy, the bough drawing, considered as a general expression of woody character, was quite exquisite. It is so delicate in its finish of curves, that, at first, the eye does not follow

them; but if you look close into the apparently straight bough, the lowest and longest on the left of this pine in the *Childe Harold*, you will find there is not a single hair's-breadth of it without its soft changes of elastic curve and living line. If you can draw at all accurately and delicately, you cannot receive a more valuable lesson than you will by outlining this bough, of its real size, with scrupulous care, and then outlining and comparing with it some of the two-pronged barbarisms of Wilson,\* in the tree on the left of his *Villa of Mæcenæ* (No. 108).

#### V. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THIRD PERIOD

As Turner became more and more accustomed to, and satisfied in, the principles of art he had introduced, his mind naturally dwelt upon them with less of the pride of discovery, and turned more and more to the noble subjects of natural colour and effect, which he found himself now able to represent. He began to think less of showing or trying what he *could* do, and more of actually doing this or that beautiful thing. It was no more a question with him how many alternations of blue with gold he could crowd into a canvas, but how nearly he could reach the actual blue of the Bay of Uri, when the dawn was on its golden cliffs. I believe, also, that in powerful minds there is generally, towards age, a return to the superstitious love of Nature which they felt in their youth: and assuredly, as Turner drew towards old age, the aspect of mechanical effort and ambitious accumulation fade from his work, and a deep imaginative delight, and tender rest in the loveliness of what he had learned to see in Nature, take their place. It is true that when goaded by the reproaches cast upon his work, he would often meet contempt with contempt, and paint, not, as in his middle period, to prove his power, but merely to astonish, or to defy, his critics. Often, also, he would *play* with his Academy work, and engage in colour tournaments with his painter-friends; the spirit which prompted such jests or challenges being natural enough to a mind now no longer in a state of doubt, but conscious of confirmed power. But here, again, the evil attendant on such play, or scorn,

\* For farther illustration of this subject see *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. Chap. IX. § 14, etc.

becomes concentrated in the Academy pictures; while the real strength and majesty of his mind are seen undiminished only in the sketches which he made during his summer journeys for his own pleasure, and in the drawings he completed from them.

Another notable characteristic of this period is, that though the mind was in a state of comparative repose, and capable of play at idle moments, it was, in its depth, infinitely more serious than heretofore—nearly all the subjects on which it dwelt having now some pathetic meaning. Formerly he painted the *Victory* in her triumph, but now the *Old Temeraire* in her decay; formerly *Napoleon at Marengo*, now *Napoleon at St. Helena*; formerly the *Ducal Palace at Venice*, now the *Cemetery at Murano*; formerly the *Life of Vandevelde*, now the *Burial of Wilkie*.

Lastly, though in most respects, this is the crowning period of Turner's genius, in a few, there are evidences in it of approaching decline. As we have seen, in each former phase of his efforts, that the full character was not developed till about its central year, so in this last the full character was not developed till the year 1840, and that character involved, in the very fulness of its imaginative beauty, some loss of distinctness; some absence of deliberation in arrangement; and, as we approach nearer and nearer the period of decline, considerable feebleness of hand. These several deficiencies, when they happen to be united in one of the fantasies struck out during retouching days at the Academy, produce results which, at the time they appeared, might have justified a regretful criticism, provided only that criticism had been offered under such sense of the painter's real greatness as might have rendered it acceptable or serviceable to him; whereas, being expressed in terms as insulting to his then existing power as forgetful of his past, they merely checked his efforts, challenged his caprices, and accelerated his decline.

Technically speaking, there are few trenchant distinctions between works of the second and third period. The most definite is, that the *figures* of the second period have faces and bodies more or less inclining to flesh colour; but in the third period the faces at least are white-looking like chalked masks (why we shall inquire presently), and the limbs usually white, with scarlet reflected lights. It is also to be observed that after the full development of the third

manner, in 1840, no more foliage is satisfactorily painted, and it rarely occurs in any prominent mass.

## VI. PICTURES OF THE THIRD PERIOD

### 518. APOLLO AND DAPHNE (1837).

Although this, like nearly all the works prepared for the Academy, is injured by excessive quantity, and is painfully divided into two lateral masses, with an unimportant centre, those lateral masses are nearly unequalled in beauty of mountain drawing. By looking back to the *Hesperides*, and comparing the masses of mountain there with these, the *naturalism* of the last period will be easily felt. All these mountains in the *Daphne* are possible—nay, they are almost reminiscences of real ranges on the flanks of Swiss valleys; the few scattered stones of the *Hesperides* have become innumerable ridges of rock; the overhanging cliffs of the *Hesperides* have become possible and beautiful slopes; the dead colours of the *Hesperides* are changed into azure and amber. The reader will find farther references to the mountain drawing of this *Daphne* in *Modern Painters*; \* but it is not worth while to insist upon them here, as it may be long before the picture is placed where any of its more subtle merit can be seen.

It is necessary, however, that the reader should in this case, as in that of the *Bay of Baïæ*, understand Turner's meaning in the figures, and their relation to the landscape. Daphne was the daughter of the river Peneus the most fertilising of the Greek rivers, by the goddess Terra (the earth). She represents, therefore, the spirit of all foliage, as springing from the earth, watered by rivers;—rather than the laurel merely. Apollo became enamoured of her, on the shore of the Peneus itself—that is to say, either in the great vale of Larissa, or in that of Tempe. The scene is here meant for Tempe, because it opens to the sea; it is not in the least *like* Tempe, which is a narrow ravine: but it expressed the accepted idea of the valley as far as Turner could interpret it, it having long been a type to us moderns of all lovely glens or vales descending from the mountains to the sea. The immediate cause of Apollo's servitude to Daphne was his having insulted Cupid, and mocked at his

\* Vol. I. p. 30.



arrows. Cupid answered, simply, "Thy bow strikes all things, Apollo, but mine shall strike *Thee*."

The boy god is seen in the picture behind Apollo and Daphne. Afterwards, when Daphne flies and Apollo pursues, Ovid compares them to a dog of Gaul, coursing a hare—the greyhound and hare Turner has, therefore, put into the foreground. When Daphne is nearly exhausted, she appeals to her father, the river Peneus—"gazing at his waves"—and he transforms her into a laurel on his shore. That is to say, the life of the foliage—the child of the river and the earth—appeals again to the river, when the sun would burn it up; and the river protects it with its flow and spray, keeping it green for ever.

So then the whole picture is to be illustrative of the union of the rivers and the earth; and of the perpetual help and delight granted by the streams, in their dew, to the earth's foliage. Observe, therefore, that Turner has put his whole strength into the expression of the roundings of the hills under the influence of the torrents; has insisted on the loveliest features of mountain scenery when full of rivers, in the quiet and clear lake on the one side, and the gleaming and tender waterfalls on the other: has covered his foreground with the richest foliage and indicated the relations of the whole to civilisation in the temples and village of the plain. It was quite natural that Turner should suppose Tempe a larger vale than it is, from Ovid's own description of the rivers meeting in it. "There the rivers meet: Spercheus crowned with poplar; and disquieted Enipeus, and aged Apidanus, and gentle Amphrysus, and Æas, and the other rivers, who, where the impulse urges them, lead to the sea their waves, wearied with winding; only Inachus is not there; he, hidden in his cave, increases his springs with weeping."

#### 519. REGULUS LEAVING ROME (1837).

A picture very disgraceful to Turner, and as valueless as any work of the third period can be; done wholly against the instincts of the painter at this time, in wicked relapse into the old rivalry with Claude. The great fault is the confusion of the radiation of light from the sun with its reflection—one proof, among thousands of other manifest ones, that truth and greatness were only granted to Turner on condition of his absolutely following his natural feeling, and that if ever he contradicted it, that moment his knowledge and his art failed him also.

## 521. PHRYNE GOING TO THE BATH (1838).

We have already ascertained the meaning, and noted the principal beauty of this picture, which, however, we must pause at again, for it is a work of primal importance, as representative of the last labours of Turner. No other work, so far studied, exists of his third period, and, by rare good fortune, of all the pictures dating after 1820 in the possession of the nation, this is the least injured. I cannot trace positive deterioration in any part of it, except the sky; and I believe it to be otherwise very nearly safe, and accurately representative of what the painter's later work was when it first appeared in the Academy, and was intended by him to remain. And this being so, the question is suggested to us very forcibly, what could be meant by those chalk-faced and crimson-limbed figures, and what was his theory respecting the function of figures in landscape?

I think, in the first place, the reader will admit, from what he has seen of the earlier Turner paintings, that he is distinguished from all other modern landscape painters by his strong human sympathy. It may be a disputed point—and I do not care here to agitate it—whether Claude's *St. George and the Dragon*, or his *Moses and the Burning Bush*, or Salvator's *Finding of Ædipus*, or Gaspar Poussin's *Dido and Eneas*, are expressive of such sympathy or not; but, among modern painters, it is indisputable that the figures are merely put in to make the pictures gay, and rarely claim any greater interest than may attach to the trade of the city, or labour of the field. Sometimes lovers in a glade, or gypsies on a common, or travellers caught in rain, may render more sentimental or dramatic the fall of shade or shower; but, beyond this, no motive for sympathy is ever presented, and, for the most part, the scarlet bodice, or rustic blouse, are all that we are supposed to require, to give us the sense of motion in the street, or life in the landscape. But we have seen that in almost every one of Turner's subjects there is some affecting or instructive relation to it in the figures; that the incident he introduces is rarely shallow in thought, but reaches either tragedy, as in the *Hesperides*, or humour as in the *Calais Pier*; and that in his first carrying out of these thoughts he showed a command of human expression no less striking than his grasp of pictorial effects. How is it then, that, in his time of fully

developed strength, the figure has become little more than a chalk puppet?

First. The usual complaints made about his *bad* figure drawing arise, in reality, from the complainant's not being sufficiently sensible of the nobleness of *good* figure drawing. Figures cannot be drawn even moderately or endurably well, unless the whole life be given to their study; and *any* figure which a professed landscape painter can paint, is still so far from the standard of real truth and excellence, that it is better no serious attempt whatever should be made in that direction. Each figure in Callcott's landscapes for instance, while it sets itself up for being right, is so miserably inferior to the worst and idlest outline of Mulready or Wilkie, that it only sickens the heart of any man who feels what figure painting should be; much more if he thinks of Titian or Veronese: the first impulse of such a just judge would be to snatch up a brush, and dash the palsied bit of draperied doll half out, and give it a pair of red dots for eyes, and so leave it—*claiming* thus to be no more than it really is—abortive and despicable. And thus it is, for one reason, that just as Turner feels the more and more what figures should be, he paints them less and less.

Secondly. Supposing that the power of figure-drawing were attainable by the landscape painter, the time necessary to complete the delineation of a crowd in one foreground would be more than is necessary in general for all the landscapes of the year. Supposing those figures in the *Phryne* properly and completely painted, certainly no more than that one picture could have been painted in the year. Now the main power of Turner's mind was in its fertility of conception; and it would have been wrong, even if it had been possible, for him to leave myriads of beautiful landscape imaginations unrecorded, while he was rounding shoulders and ankles from academy models. But once grant that the figures are to be left sketchy, and it rests with those who blame Turner to show that any other way of sketching them is better than his. They have now a fair opportunity of trying. Let them copy the landscape of this *Phryne* as it is; then put in the figures in their own improved way; and I believe they will find they have spoiled their picture.

Thirdly. Whenever figures are brilliantly dressed, or in full light in a sunny landscape, they always lead the eye, and throw the rest of the scene into more or less retiring

colour. Now, in pursuit of his newly discovered facts about colour, Turner had reached the top of his scale, or nearly so, in the sky, and the foliage, and the hills; he felt, however, still that the figures ought to lead the light—and nothing *would* lead it, in pictures of so high a key, but absolute white, and masses of pure colour, which accordingly he gives them. I think, however, this was an error, correspondent exactly to the error on the opposite side, which made the early landscapists paint their shades too black, to *throw out* their lights. So Turner paints his figures too white, to *subdue* his lights. Both carried out a principle, true in itself, too far.

I say this of Turner with diffidence, however, not having yet made up my mind about these later figures; only I know that he never raised his figures to so high a key in his drawings, and I think the result was in these more satisfactory.

Fourthly. Although there is much to shock, and more to surprise the eye in this late figure painting, there are merits in it which serious study would show to be of a high order. The colours used are too violent; but the choice of these colours, and the adjustment of their relations, are always right. Pure vermilion does not rightly represent the transparent scarlets of flesh; but the fact that transparent scarlets *are* in flesh, instead of grey and brown, is a noble fact, which it was better to perceive and declare, however imperfectly, than, for the sake of affronting nobody, to keep to the old and generally accepted colours. And the infinitudes of gradation, and accurately reflected colour, which Turner has wrought into these strange figure groups, are nearly as admirable as the other portions of this work; only the admirableness is of a kind which is only artistical, and only to be perceived by artists, so that I do not trouble the general reader by further insisting on it. Without any artistical knowledge, however, he may perceive one kind of merit in these figures—their freedom, fire, and frequent grace of action; and a little watching of this involved troop of girls, tossing the white statue of Cupid far into the air out of the midst of them, will enable the spectator to conceive for himself, merely a little rejecting or modifying the Turnerian eccentricities, what such a wild flight of Greek girl-gladness must have been, infinitely more earnestly and justly than any, the most careful and

perfect Academy drawing (that I have seen) by modern hands.

Lastly.—Notwithstanding his deep sympathy and imaginative power, there was, throughout Turner's later life, an infirmity in his figure conception which has always been to me, out of the whole multitude of questions and mysteries that have come across me concerning art, the most inexplicable. With the most exquisite sense of grace and proportion in other forms, he continually admits awkwardnesses and errors in his figures which a child of ten years old would have avoided. Sometimes, as in his drawing of *Gosport*, he twists a head right round upon the shoulders: constantly he makes the head half a foot too high, as in the figure of Apollo in the *Bay of Baïæ*: legs that will not join the trunk are frequent also: but his favourite mismanagement of all is, putting one eye an inch or two higher than the other. As I have just stated, this is, for the most part, wholly inexplicable to me: all that I can guess respecting it is, that he had got so much into the habit of weaving natural forms—rocks, boughs, and waves—into exactly the shapes that would best help his composition, that when he came to an unsubduable form in man or animal, he could not endure the resistance, and lifted features out of their places as he would have raised or dropped one window in a tower whose equalities tormented him: and wrung a neck as remorselessly as he would have twisted a bough, to get it into the light or shade he wanted. I do not mean, of course, to advance this as an excuse for the proceeding, but as a conceivable motive for it. The infirmity which prevented his being hurt by such derangements, was, I believe, essential to his having become a landscape painter at all. If he had had as fine an eye for human beauty as he had keen interest in human feeling, he would assuredly have been drawn into pure historical painting: and we should have had (oil painting not being properly understood among us) a series of imperfectly-executed figure subjects, uniting Tintoret's fancy with Veronese's colour, but hollow and false in conception, because figure models suggestive of colour do not exist in the real life around us, and he would have pursued a false ideal, like Etty. He was not permitted thus to waste his life, but his escape from such a fate was, I believe, very narrow. He studied figure painting carefully, and not unsuccessfully, for some time; and when he was about

seventeen, painted a portrait of himself, which will bear no very disadvantageous comparison with the earlier and firmly handled portraits of Watson and Raeburn.\* A picture of a smith's shop, which seems to have been painted, soon after, in emulation of Wilkie, perhaps convinced him of his weakness in more delicate figure drawing, and delivered him for ever to the teaching of the clouds and hills. With what intent, or against how great a sense of failure he persisted in occasional experiments in the figure, such as the *Boccaccio* and *Shadrach*, I cannot tell; but the infirmity increased with age: and in the *Ariadne* of No. 525, the public may see, as far as I am aware, the worst figure that Turner ever painted, and perhaps that was ever painted by anybody. I have not the least wish to conceal Turner's defects (or any one else's); on the contrary, I think the denial of defects in heroes one of the most baneful abuses of truth of which the world is guilty. But though the faults of a great or good man should never be extenuated, they should be much forgiven, and at times forgotten. It is wrong and unwise to expose defects in a time or place when they take away our power of feeling virtues; and I should be glad if all these figure pictures, with the *Fall of Carthage*, the *Regulus*, and one or two of the last works (between 1845 and 1850), were placed in a condemned cell, or chamber of humiliation, by themselves; always, however, in good light, so that people who wished to see the sins of Turner, might examine them to their entire satisfaction—but not exhibited where they only serve to prompt and attract ridicule, suggest doubts of real excellence, and mingle pain with enjoyment, and regret with admiration.

I cannot, however, leave this *Phryne*, without once more commending it to the reader's most careful study. Its foliage is exquisite; the invention of incident quite endless—from the inlaid marbles of the pavement to the outmost fold of fading hills, there is not a square inch of the picture without its group of fancies: its colour, though broken in

\* This portrait he gave to his housekeeper, who bequeathed it to me, and it is now in my possession, fortunately in a perfect state of preservation. The likeness must have been a striking one, for all who knew Turner well can trace the features and the glance of the old man through the glow of youth; and recognise the form of the grey forehead under the shadow of the long flowing chestnut hair. Another portrait, also by his own hand, painted later in life, is said to exist in the National collection.

general effect, is incomparably beautiful and brilliant in detail; and there is as much architectural design and landscape gardening in the middle distance as would be worth, to any student of Renaissance composition, at least twenty separate journeys to Genoa and Vicenza. For those who like towers better than temples, and wild hills better than walled terraces, the second distance, reaching to the horizon, will be found equally rich in its gifts.

522.

I pass by this picture for the moment; we shall return to it presently.

523. AGRIPPINA (1839).

There was once some wonderful light in this painting, but it has been chilled by time. If it were in a better place, there would be seen some noble passages in it; but architecture of the class here chosen is unavailable for producing an impressive picture.

525. BACCHUS AND ARIADNE (1840).

This 1840 picture is interesting, as the first exhibited in the Academy which was indicative of definite failure in power of hand and eye; the trees being altogether ill painted, and especially uncertain in form of stem. Of the figures I have spoken already. There are pretty passages in the distance, but none which can be considered as redeeming; it should be banished from these walls with all kindly haste.

527. VENICE—THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS (1840).

One of the worst of Turner's later pictures. He had at this time quite lost the power of painting architectural detail, and his feeling for *Gothic* architecture had never, at any period of his life, been true, owing to his early education among classical models. He always painted it too white. He has, besides, altered the proportions of the windows of the Ducal Palace, thrust the prison out of its line some points round to the north, and raised the Bridge of Sighs much too high. But the great singularity of the picture is, that, with a caprice much resembling many of Tintoret's, he has striven to be gay where everyone else would have been gloomy, and painted the *Bridge of Sighs* in intense light—all white against tender blue, as if it had been just built of alabaster for a queen to cross at her bridal. We have seen him get into the same temper beside the Lake Avernus. There seemed through all his life to be one main

sorrow and fear hunting him—a sense of the passing away, or else the destructive and tempting character of beauty. The choice of subject for a clue to all his compositions, the *Fallacies of Hope*, marked this strongly; and he would constantly express an extreme beauty where he *meant* that there was most threatening and ultimate sorrow. Compare, in the present series, this picture, the *Golden Bough*, the *Phryne*, and the *Sun of Venice*.

531. THE BURIAL OF WILKIE (1842).

Spoiled by Turner's endeavour to give funereal and unnatural blackness to the sails. There is considerable power in parts of it, but it has no high merit, nor material interest. There are several pictures of this kind in the National collection, which are all but valueless among so many beautiful ones, but which would be precious to students in our provincial towns. Surely it would be well if one or two could thus be set on active and honourable service, instead of remaining, as they must in the principal gallery, subjects for languid contemplation, or vague regret.

532. THE EXILE AND THE ROCK LIMPET (1842).

Once a noble piece of colour, now quite changed just at the focus of light where the sun is setting, and injured everywhere. The figure is not, however, in reality quite so ill drawn as it looks, its appearance of caricatured length being in great part owing to the strong reflection of the limbs, mistaken by the eye, at a distance, for part of the limbs themselves.

The lines which Turner gave with this picture are very important, being the only verbal expression of that association in his mind of sunset colour with blood, before spoken of:—

“ Ah, thy tent-formed shell is like  
A soldier's mighty bivouac, alone  
Amidst a sea of blood.—  
—But *you* can join your comrades.”

The conceit of Napoleon's seeing a resemblance in the limpet's shell to a tent, was thought trivial by most people at the time; it may be so (though not to my mind); the second thought, that even this poor wave-washed disk had power and liberty, denied to *him*, will hardly, I think, be mocked at.

535. THE “ SUN OF VENICE ” GOING TO SEA (1843).

*Il Sole di Venezia* is supposed to be the name of the



fishing boat. (I have actually seen this name on a boat's stern.) The nomenclature is emphasised by a painting of Venice, with the sun rising, on the main sail of the boat, which, if the picture were hung lower,\* the reader would find to be itself a little vignette. The compliment to the Venetian fisher as an artist is, however, a little overstrained. I have never seen any elaborate landscape on the sails, but often the sun, moon, and stars, with crosses and chequer patterns—sometimes a saint or madonna, rather more hard-featured than mainland saints.\*

If the reader will look back from this picture to the *Ulysses*, he will be struck by the apparent persistence of Turner's mind in the same idea of boat beauty; only the Venetian example is incomparably the loveliest, its sails being true in form and set, and exquisitely wrought in curve. The prevailing melancholy of Turner's mind at the time was, however, marked in the motto; Academy Catalogue, 1843:—

“Fair shines the morn, and soft the Zephyr blows ;  
 Venetia's fisher spreads his sail so gay,  
 ‘Nor heeds the demon that in grim repose  
 Expects his evening prey.’”†

The sea in this picture was once exquisitely beautiful: it is not very severely injured, but has lost much of its transparency in the green ripples. The sky was little more than flake white laid with the pallet-knife: it has got darker, and spotted, destroying the relief of the sails. The buildings in the distance are the ducal palace, dome of St. Mark's, and on the extreme left the tower of San Giorgio Maggiore. The ducal palace, as usual, is much too white, but with

\* The reader will find nearly every variety of these sails drawn with unerring accuracy, and affectionate fidelity, in the later pictures of Mr. E. W. Cooke, and some account of their general character in my notes on the *Harbours of England*.

† Turner seems to have revised his own additions to Gray, in the catalogues, as he did his pictures on the walls, with much discomfiture to the painter and the public. He wanted afterwards to make the first lines of this legend rhyme with each other; and to read:—

“‘Fair shines the morn, the Zephyr’ (west wind) ‘blows a gale’  
 Venetia's fisher spreads his painted sail.”

The two readings got confused, and, if I remember right, some of the catalogues read “soft the Zephyr blows a gale” and “spreads his painted sail so gay”—to the great admiration of the collectors of the Sibylline leaves of the *Fallacies of Hope*.

beautiful gradations in its relief against the morning mist. The marvellous brilliancy of the arrangement of colour in this picture renders it, to my mind, one of Turner's leading works in oil.

541. SAN BENEDETTO (1843).

This picture is wrongly named in the published catalogue. The *Approach to Venice*, painted in 1844, to illustrate Byron's lines, was sold on the Academy walls, and is not among the pictures belonging to the nation. This one was exhibited in 1843, under the title of *San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina*. But even the *San Benedetto* is a mistake of Turner's; there being no church nor quarter belonging to that saint on either side of the Giudecca, or in any possible way included in this view. The church of San Benedetto is deep in the town, close to the Ca' Grimani; and the only way of accounting for the title given, is that Turner might have half remembered the less frequently occurring name of St. Biagio, under whose protection the "fondamenta"—or block of houses on the left of this picture—with some spacious barracks, are verily placed. St. Biagio has no church, however; and the nearest one which, by any stretch of imagination, could be gathered into this view, is the little Santa Eufemia. The buildings on the right are also, for the most part, imaginary in their details, especially in the pretty bridge which connects two of their masses: and yet, without one single accurate detail, the picture is the likeliest thing to what it is meant for—the looking out of the Giudecca landwards, at sunset—of all that I have ever seen. The buildings have, in reality, that proportion and character of mass, as one glides up the centre of the tide stream: they float exactly in that strange, mirageful, wistful way in the sea mist—rosy ghosts of houses without foundations; the blue line of poplars and copse about the Fusina marshes shows itself just in that way on the horizon; the flowing gold of the water, and quiet gold of the air, face and reflect each other just so; the boats rest so, with their black prows poised in the midst of the amber flame, or glide by so, the boatman stretched far aslope upon his deep-laid oar.

Take it all in all, I think this the best Venetian picture of Turner's which is left to us; for the *Approach to Venice* (of 1844), which was beyond all comparison the best, is now a miserable wreck of dead colours. This is tolerably safe. The writer of the notes in the published catalogue is mis-

taken in supposing that the upper clouds have changed in colour; they were always dark purple, edged with scarlet; but they have got chilled and opaque. The blue of the distance has altered slightly, making the sun too visible a spot; but the water is little injured, and I think it the best piece of surface-painting which Turner has left in oil colours. One of the strongest points in his *Venice* painting is his understanding of the way a gondola is rowed, owing to his affectionate studies of boats when he was a boy, and throughout his life. No other painters ever give the thrust of the gondoliers rightly; they make them bend affectedly—very often impossibly—flourishing with the oar as if they stood up merely to show their figures. Many of our painters even put the oar on the wrong side of the boat.\* The gondolier on the left side of this picture, rowing the long barge, is exactly right, at the moment of the main thrust. Nevertheless, considered as a boatman, Turner is seriously to be blamed for allowing the fouling of those two gondolas in the middle of the picture, one of which must certainly have gone clear through the other before they could get into their present position.

549. *UNDINE GIVING THE RING* (1846).

I shall take no notice of the three pictures painted in the period of decline. It was ill-judged to exhibit them: they occupy to Turner's other works precisely the relation which *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous* hold to Scott's early novels. They are also in positions which render it impossible to point out to the reader the *distinctive* characters in the execution, indicative of mental disease; though in reality these characters are so trenchant that the time of fatal change may be brought within a limit of three or four months, towards the close of the year 1845.

522. *THE FIGHTING TEMERAIRE* † (1839).

I return to this picture, instead of taking it in its due order; and I think I shall be able to show reason for pleading that, whatever ultimate arrangement may be adopted for the Turner gallery, this canvass may always close the series. I have stated in the *Harbours of England* that it

\* The stern, or guiding oar of the gondola, is always on the right-hand side. For more detailed account of the modes of rowing in Venice, see *Stones of Venice*, Vol. II. Appendix I.

† *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth, to be broken up.*—(Acad. Catalogue.)

was the last picture he ever executed with his *perfect* power; but that statement needs some explanation. He produced, as late as the year 1843, works which, take them all in all, may rank among his greatest; but they were great by reason of their majestic or tender conception, more than by workmanship; and they show some failure in distinctness of sight, and firmness of hand. This is especially marked when any vegetation occurs, by imperfect and blunt rendering of the foliage; and the *Old Temeraire* is the last picture in which Turner's execution is as firm and faultless as in middle life;—the last in which lines requiring exquisite precision, such as those of the masts and yards of shipping, are drawn rightly, and at once. When he painted the *Temeraire*, Turner could, if he had liked, have painted the *Shipwreck* or the *Ulysses* over again; but, when he painted the *Sun of Venice*, though he was able to do different, and in some sort more beautiful things, he could not have done *those* again.

I consider, therefore, Turner's period of central power, entirely developed and entirely unabated, to begin with the *Ulysses*, and close with the *Temeraire*; including a period, therefore, of ten years exactly, 1829-1839.

The one picture, it will be observed, is of sunrise; the other of sunset.

The one of a ship entering on its voyage; and the other of a ship closing its course for ever.

The one, in all the circumstances of its subject, unconsciously illustrative of his own life in its triumph.

The other, in all the circumstances of its subject, unconsciously illustrative of his own life in its decline.

I do not suppose that Turner, deep as his bye-thoughts often were, had any under meaning in either of these pictures: but, as accurately as the first sets forth his escape to the wild brightness of Nature, to reign amidst all her happy spirits, so does the last set forth his returning to die by the shore of the Thames: the cold mists gathering over his strength, and all men crying out against him, and dragging the old *Fighting Temeraire* out of their way, with dim, fuliginous contumely.

The period thus granted to his consummate power seems a short one. Yet, within the space of it, he had made five-sixths (or about 80) of the England drawings; the whole series of the Rivers of France—66 in number; for the Bible illustrations, 26; for Scott's works, 62; for Byron's

33; for Rogers', 57; for Campbell's, 20; for Milton's, 7; for Moore's, 4; for *The Keepsake*, 24; and of miscellaneous subjects, 20 or 30 more; the least total of the known drawings being thus something above 400:—allow twelve weeks a year for oil painting and travelling, and the drawings (wholly exclusive of unknown private commissions and some thousands of sketches) are at the rate of one a week through the whole period of ten years.

The work which thus nobly closes the series is a solemn expression of a sympathy with seamen and with ships, which had been one of the governing emotions in Turner's mind throughout his life. It is also the last of a group of pictures, painted at different times, but all illustrative of one haunting conception, of the central struggle at Trafalgar. The first was, I believe, that exhibited in the British Institution in 1808; *The battle of Trafalgar, as seen from the mizzen shrouds of the Victory*. It is a magnificent picture in his early manner; it is in the nation's possession, and ought surely to have been exhibited in this series instead of the *Calais Pier*, being remarkable in many ways, but chiefly for its endeavour to give the spectator a complete map of everything visible in the ships *Victory* and *Redoubtable* at the moment of Nelson's death-wound. Then came the *Trafalgar*, now at Greenwich Hospital, representing the *Victory* after the battle; a picture which, for my own part, though said to have been spoiled by ill-advised compliances on Turner's part with requests for alteration, I would rather have than any one in the national collection. Lastly, came this *Temeraire*, which is the best memorial that Turner could give to the ship which was the *Victory's* companion in her closing strife.\*

The painting of the *Temeraire* was received with a general feeling of sympathy. No abusive voice, as far as I remember, was ever raised against it. And the feeling was just; for of all pictures of subjects not visibly involving

\* She was the second ship in Nelson's line; and having little provisions or water on board, was what sailors call, "flying light," so as to be able to keep pace with the fast sailing *Victory*. When the latter drew upon herself all the enemy's fire, the *Temeraire* tried to pass her, to take it in her stead; but Nelson himself hailed her to keep astern. The *Temeraire* cut away her studding-sails, and held back, receiving the enemy's fire into her bows without returning a shot. Two hours later, she lay with a French seventy-four gun-ship on each side of her, both her prizes, one lashed to her mainmast, and one to her anchor.

human pain, this is, I believe, the most pathetic that was ever painted. The utmost pensiveness which can ordinarily be given to a landscape depends on adjuncts of ruin: but no ruin was ever so affecting as this gliding of the vessel to her grave. A ruin cannot be, for whatever memories may be connected with it, and whatever witness it may have borne to the courage or the glory of men, it never seems to have offered itself to their danger, and associated itself with their acts, as a ship of battle can. The mere facts of motion, and obedience to human guidance, double the interest of the vessel: nor less her organised perfectness, giving her the look, and partly the character of a living creature, that may indeed be maimed in limb, or decrepit in frame, but must either live or die, and cannot be added to nor diminished from—heaped up and dragged down—as a building can. And this particular ship, crowned in the Trafalgar hour of trial with chief victory—prevailing over the fatal vessel that had given Nelson death—surely, if ever anything without a soul deserved honour or affection, we owed them here. Those sails that strained so full bent into the battle—that broad bow that struck the surf aside, enlarging silently in steadfast haste, full front to the shot—resistless and without reply—those triple ports whose choirs of flame rang forth in their courses, into the fierce revenging monotone, which, when it died away, left no answering voice to rise any more upon the sea against the strength of England—those sides that were wet with the long runlets of English life-blood, like press-planks at vintage, gleaming goodly crimson down to the cast and clash of the washing foam—those pale masts that stayed themselves up against the war-ruin, shaking out their ensigns through the thunder, till sail and ensign drooped—steep in the death-stilled pause of Andalusian air, burning with its witness-cloud of human souls at rest,—surely, for these some sacred care might have been left in our thoughts—some quiet space amidst the lapse of English waters?

Nay, not so. We have stern keepers to trust her glory to—the fire and the worm. Never more shall sunset lay golden robe on her, nor starlight tremble on the waves that part at her gliding. Perhaps, where the low gate opens to some cottage-garden, the tired traveller may ask, idly, why the moss grows so green on its rugged wood; and even the sailor's child may not answer, nor know, that the night-dew lies deep in the war-rents of the wood of the old *Temeraire*.

## APPENDIX

As the number of pictures now at Marlborough House is large enough to give the reader some idea of the value of the entire collection, the following notes respecting what I believe to be the best mode of exhibiting that collection, may perhaps be useful.

The expediency of protecting oil pictures, as well as drawings, by glass, has been already fully admitted by the Trustees of the National Gallery, since the two Correggios, the Raphael, the Francias, the Perugino, the John Bellini, and Wilkie's *Festival*, are already so protected.\* And of all pictures whatsoever, Turner's are those which must suffer most from the present mode of their exposure. The effects of all the later paintings are dependent on the loading of the colour; and the white, in many of the high lights, stands out in diminutive crags, with intermediate craters and ravines: every one of whose cellular hollows serves as a receptacle for the dust of London, which cannot afterwards be removed but by grinding away the eminences that protect it—in other words, destroying the handling of Turner at the very spots which are the foci of his effects. Not only so, but the surfaces of most of his later pictures are more or less cracked; often gaping widely: every fissure offering its convenient ledge for the repose of the floating defilement.

Now, if the power of Turner were independent of the *pitch* of his colour, so that tones sinking daily into more pensive shade might yet retain their meaning and their harmony, it might be a point deserving discussion, whether their preservation at a particular key was worth the alleged

\* I am at a loss to determine what the standard of excellence may be which is supposed to warrant the national expenditure, in addition to the price of the picture, of at least two pounds ten shillings for plate glass; since I observe that Garofalo's *St. Augustine* reaches that standard; but Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* does not; this picture being precisely, of all in the gallery, the one which I should have thought would have been first glazed, or first, at all events, after that noble Perugino; for the acquisition of which, by the way, the Trustees are to be most earnestly thanked.

inconvenience resulting from the use of glass. In the case of Wilkie's *Festival* for instance, the telling of his story would not be seriously interfered with, though the nose of the spot became less brilliantly rubicund, and the cloak of his wife sank into a homelier grey. But Turner's work is especially the painting of sunshine: it is not merely *relative* hue that he aims at, but absolute assertion of *positive* hue; and when he renders the edge of a cloud by pure vermilion or pure gold, his whole meaning is destroyed if the vermilion be changed into russet, and the gold into brown. He does not intend to tell you that sunsets are brown, but that they are burning; scarlet, with him, means scarlet, and in no wise dun colour, or dust colour; and white means white, and by no means, nor under any sort of interpretation, black.

But farther. The frequent assertion that glass interferes with the effect of oil pictures is wholly irrelevant. If a painting cannot be seen through glass, it cannot be seen through its own varnish. Any position which renders the glass offensive by its reflection, will in like manner make the glaze of the surface of the picture visible instead of the colour. The inconvenience is less distinct, there being often only a feeble glimmer on the varnish, when there would be a vivid flash on the glass, but the glimmer is quite enough to prevent the true colour being seen; while there is this advantage in the glass, that it tells the spectator *when* he cannot see; whereas the glimmer of the varnish often passes, with an inattentive observer, for a feeble part of the real painting, and he does not try to get a better position.

Glass has another advantage, when used to cover the recent paintings of Turner, in giving a delicate, but very precious, softness to surfaces of pigment which, in his later practice, he was apt to leave looking too much like lime or mortar.

. The question of the acceptance of glass as a protection for pictures is, however, intimately connected with another: namely, whether we are to continue to hang them above the eye. Of course, as long as a picture is regarded by us merely as a piece of ostentatious furniture, answering no other purpose than that of covering the walls of rooms, with a dark tapestry worth a thousand guineas a yard, it is of no consequence whether we protect them or not. There will always be dealers ready to provide us with this same costly tapestry, in which we need not be studious to preserve the



designs we do not care to see. If the rain or the rats should make an end of the *Tintoret* which is now hung in the first room of the Louvre at a height of fifty feet from the ground, it will be easy to obtain from the manufactories of Venice another *Tintoret*, which, hung at the same height, shall look altogether as well; and if any harm should happen to the fish in the sea piece of Turner which hangs above his *Carthage* in the National Gallery, a few bold dashes of white may replace them, as long as the picture remains where it is, with perfect satisfaction to the public. But if ever we come to understand that the function of a picture, after all, with respect to mankind, is not merely to be bought, but to be seen, it will follow that a picture which deserves a price deserves a place; and that all paintings which are worth keeping, are worth, also, the rent of so much wall as shall be necessary to show them to the best advantage, and in the least fatiguing way for the spectator.

It would be interesting if we could obtain a return of the sum which the English nation pays annually for park walls to enclose game, stable walls to separate horses, and garden walls to ripen peaches; and if we could compare this ascertained sum with what it pays for walls to show its art upon. How soon it may desire to quit itself of the dishonour which would result from the comparison I do not know; but as the public appear to be seriously taking some interest in the pending questions respecting their new National Gallery, it is, perhaps, worth while to state the following general principles of good picture exhibitions.

1st. All large pictures should be on walls lighted from above; because light, from whatever point it enters, must be gradually subdued as it passes farther into the room. Now, if it enters at either side of the picture, the gradation of diminishing light to the other side is generally unnatural; but if the light falls from above, its gradation from the sky of the picture down to the foreground is never unnatural, even in a figure piece, and is often a great help to the effect of a landscape. Even interiors, in which lateral light is represented as entering a room, and none as falling from the ceiling, are yet best seen by light from above: for a lateral light contrary to the supposed direction of that in the picture will greatly neutralise its effect; and a lateral light in the same direction will exaggerate it. The artist's real intention can only be seen fairly by light from above.

2nd. Every picture should be hung so as to admit of its horizon being brought on a level with the eye of the spectator, without difficulty, or stooping. When pictures are small, one line may be disposed so as to be seen by a sitting spectator, and one to be seen standing, but more than two lines should never be admitted. A *model* gallery should have one line only; and some interval between each picture, to prevent the interference of the colours of one piece with those of the rest—a most serious source of deterioration of effect.

3rd. If pictures were placed thus, only in one low line, the gorgeousness of large rooms and galleries would be lost, and it would be useless to endeavour to obtain any imposing architectural effect by the arrangement or extent of the rooms. But the far more important objects might be attained, of making them perfectly comfortable, securing good light in the darkest days, and ventilation without draughts in the warmest and coldest.

4th. And if hope of architectural effect were thus surrendered, there would be a great advantage in giving large upright pictures a room to themselves. For as the perspective horizon of such pictures cannot always be brought low enough even for a standing spectator, and as, whether it can or not, the upper parts of great designs are often more interesting than the lower, the floor at the farther extremity of the room might be raised by the number of steps necessary to give full command of the composition; and a narrow lateral gallery carried, from this elevated dais, to its sides. Such a gallery of close access to the flanks of pictures like Titian's *Assumption* or *Peter Martyr* would be of the greatest service to artists.

5th. It is of the highest importance that the works of each master should be kept together. No great master can be thoroughly enjoyed but by getting into his humour, and remaining long enough under his influence to understand his whole mode and cast of thought. The contrast of works by different masters never brings out their merits; but their defects: the spectator's effort (if he is kind enough to make any) to throw his mind into their various tempers, materially increases his fatigue—and the fatigue of examining a series of pictures carefully is always great, even under the most favourable circumstances. The advantage thus gained in peace of mind and power of understanding,

by the assemblage of the works of each master, is connected with another, hardly less important, in the light thrown on the painter's own progress of intellect and methods of study.

6th. Whatever sketches and studies for any picture exists by its master's hand, should be collected at any sacrifice; a little reciprocal courtesy among Governments might easily bring this about: such studies should be shown under glass (as in the rooms appropriated to drawings in the Louvre), in the centre of the room in which the picture itself is placed. The existing engravings from it, whatever their merit or demerit (it is often a great point in art education to demonstrate the *last*), should be collected and exhibited in a similar manner.

7th. Although the rooms, if thus disposed, would never, as aforesaid, produce any bold architectural effect (the tables just proposed in the centre of each room being especially adverse to such effect), they might be rendered separately beautiful, by decoration so arranged as not to interfere with the colour of the pictures. The blankness and poverty of colour are, in such adjuncts, much more to be dreaded than its power: the discordance of a dead colour is more painful than the discordance of a glowing one: and it is better slightly to eclipse a picture by pleasantness of adjunct, than to bring the spectator to it disgusted by collateral deformities.

8th. Though the idea of a single line of pictures, seen by light from above, involves externally, as well as internally, the sacrifice of the ordinary elements of architectural splendour, I am certain the exterior even of this long and low gallery could be rendered not only impressive, but a most interesting school of art. I would dispose it in long arcades; if the space were limited, returning upon itself like a labyrinth: the walls to be double, with passages of various access between them, in order to secure the pictures from the variations of temperature in the external air; the outer walls to be of the most beautiful British building stones—chiefly our whitest limestone, black marble, and Cornish serpentine, variously shafted and inlaid; between each two arches a white marble niche, containing a statue of some great artist; the whole approximating, in effect, to the lower arcades of the Baptistery of Pisa, continued into an extent like that of the Pisan Campo Santo. Courts

should be left between its returns, with porches at the outer angles, leading one into each division of the building appropriated to a particular school; so as to save the visitor from the trouble of hunting for his field of study through the length of the labyrinth: and the smaller chambers appropriated to separate pictures should branch out into these courts from the main body of the building.

9th. As the condition that the pictures should be placed at the level of sight would do away with all objections to glass as an impediment of vision (who is there who cannot see the Perugino in the National Gallery?), *all* pictures should be put under glass, and firmly secured and made airtight behind. The glass is an important protection, not only from dust, but from chance injury. I have seen a student in the Vernon Gallery mixing his oil colours on his pallet knife, and holding the knife, full charged, within half an inch, or less, of the surface of the picture he was copying, to see if he had matched the colour. The slightest accidental jar given to the hand would have added a new and spirited touch to the masterpiece.

10th. Supposing the pictures thus protected, it matters very little to what atmosphere their frames and glasses may be exposed. The most central situation for a National Gallery would be the most serviceable, and therefore the best. The only things to be *insisted* upon are a gravel foundation and good drainage, with, of course, light on the roof, uninterrupted by wafts of smoke from manufactory chimneys, or shadows of great blocks of houses.

11th. No drawing is worth a nation's keeping if it be not either good, or documentarily precious. If it be either of these, it is worth a bit of glass and a wooden frame. All drawings should be glazed, simply framed in wood, and enclosed in sliding grooves in portable cases. For the more beautiful ones, golden frames should be provided at central tables; turning on a swivel, with grooves in the thickness of them, into which the wooden frame (beaded) should slide in an instant, and show the drawing framed in gold. The department for the drawings should be, of course, separate, and like a beautiful and spacious library, with its cases of drawings ranged on the walls (as those of the coins are in the Coin-room of the British Museum), and convenient recesses, with pleasant lateral light, for the visitors to take each his case of drawings into. Lateral light is best for

drawings, because the variation in intensity is small, and of little consequence to a small work; but the shadow of the head is inconvenient in looking close at them, when the light falls from above.

12th. I think the collections of Natural History should be kept separate from those of Art. Books, manuscripts, coins, sculpture, pottery, metal-work, engravings, drawings, and pictures, should be in one building; and minerals, fossils, shells, and stuffed animals (with a perfect library of works on natural history), in another, connected, as at Paris, with the Zoological Gardens.

It would of course be difficult to accomplish all this, but the national interest is only beginning to be awakened in works of art; and as soon as we care, nationally, one half as much for pictures as we do for drawing-room furniture, or footmen's liveries, all this, or more than this, will be done—perhaps after many errors and failures, and infinite waste of money in trying to economise; but I feel convinced we shall do it at last: and although poor Turner might well, himself, have classed the whole project, had he seen his pictures in their present places, among the profoundest of the Fallacies of Hope, I believe that even from the abyss of Marlborough House he will wield stronger influence than from the brilliant line of the Academy; that this dark and insulted "Turner Gallery" will be the germ of a noble and serviceable "National Gallery," and that to the poor barber's son of Maiden Lane we shall owe our first understanding of the right way either to look at Nature, or at Art.

THE END





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